Tail of the Moon

Rinko Ueda

Tail of the Moon

Usagi is the granddaughter of the leader of a prestigious ninja village, but she's such a klutz that she's never made it out of the kiddie class. Frustrated with Usagi's lack of progress, her great-grandfather sends her to marry Lord Hanzo and have lots of ninja babies. But the lord has no interest in her or her childbearing potential!

Hanzo is waiting for Usagi to qualify as a ninja before marrying her, but Usagi doesn't seem to be getting any closer to achieving her goal. Frustrated by the long wait, her great-grandfather decides to call off the engagement!

7

Story & Art by

Rinko Ueda

Shojo Beat

Tail of the Moon™

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Volume 7

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Story Thus Far...

It is the Era of the Warring States. Usagi is a failure as a ninja, but she is a skilled herbalist. She is working hard to qualify as a ninja so she can be the bride of Hattori Hanzo (aka "Shimo no Hanzo")!

Usagi is captured by Hikaru and taken to Kouga. Goemon comes to save her, but Hikaru forces him to drink an asphyxiation potion and attacks him! On top of being in bad shape because of the potion, Goemon is now critically wounded.

Later, Hikaru sets fire to the village and attacks village leader Kanbutsu, creating havoc everywhere. Surprisingly, Goemon tries to protect Hikaru. As it turns out, Goemon was once Hikaru's only childhood friend. Because Goemon unintentionally broke a promise he made to Hikaru, Hikaru has not been able to believe in anyone since then..

The incident at Kouga was settled, and Usagi returns to Iga to practice her ninjutsu. Suddenly, her great-grandfather appears and tells Hanzo the engagement is cancelled?!

Chapter 43
Tail of the Moon

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE USAGI DO SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING."

-TANII, SAITAMA PREFECTURE

UNWANTED
WAS I NOTHING MORE THAN AN UNWANTED PERSON...
...TO HANZO?
USAGI.
COLLECT YOUR BELONGINGS. WE'RE GOING BACK TO HOJIRO.

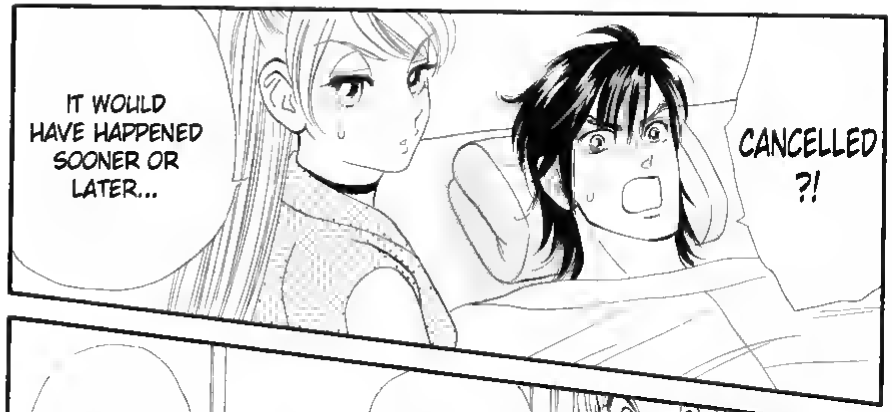
HANZO?!
THIS WAS AN UNWANTED ENGAGEMENT FOR ME FROM THE START...
...SO I'M RELIEVED TO HEAR THAT.
HMM...
THEN WE HAVE...AN AGREEMENT.

I WAS EXPECTING EITHER...
"I WILL NOT CANCEL THE ENGAGEMENT!!" OR...
"USAGI IS THE ONLY PERSON FOR ME!!"
You sound so much like him.

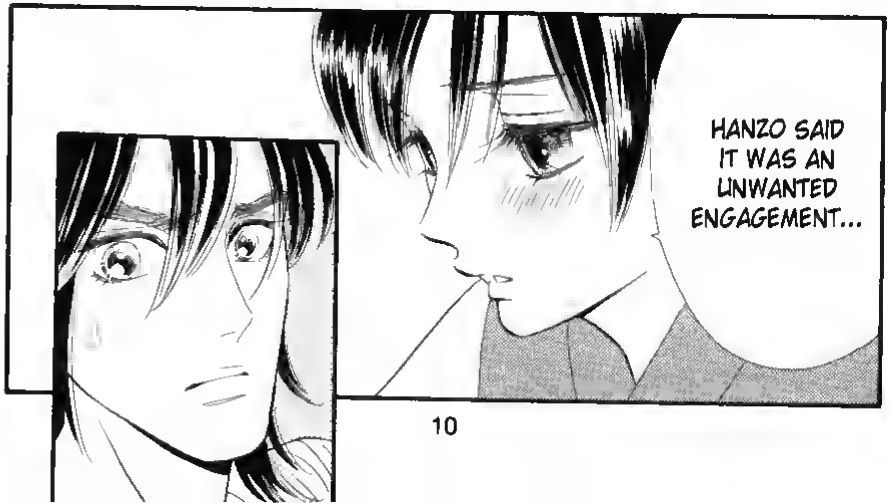
I NEVER THOUGHT HANZO WOULD ACTUALLY AGREE...
WHOA!
MASTER!!

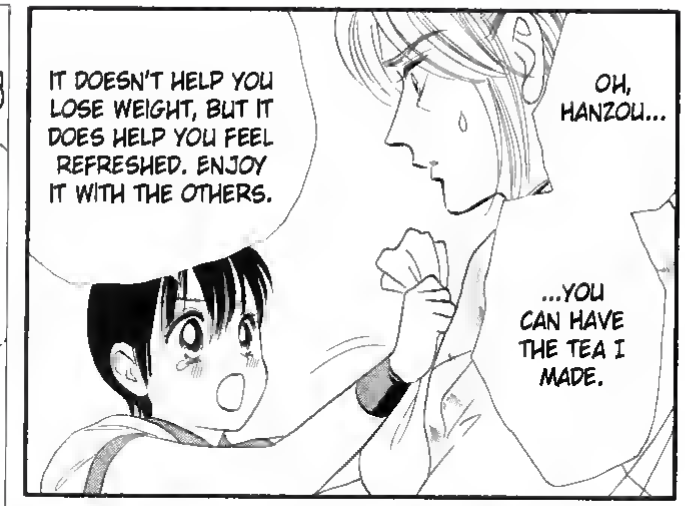
HE DIDN'T MEAN IT!!
HANZOU...
DON'T CANCEL THE ENGAGEMENT, USAGI!!

YOU'RE SUCH A MEAN OLD MAN!!
SO YOU WERE TRYING TO TRICK HANZO, MASTER?
I WAS SO SURE THAT HE WOULD SAY THAT...
BUT...
AT LEAST I KNOW HOW HANZO REALLY FEELS NOW, SO...


IT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED SOONER OR LATER...
CANCELLED ?!

I CAN'T DO ANYTHING...
GOEMON, DON'T GET TOO EXCITED...
USAGI...
AND YOU'RE OKAY WITH THAT ?!


HANZO SAID IT WAS AN UNWANTED ENGAGEMENT...


IT WAS JUST A TIT FOR TAT RESPONSE ON HANZO'S PART.
HE'S NEVER BEEN GOOD AT SAYING HOW HE REALLY FEELS...
JUST FORGET IT.
I DON'T WANT HANZO TO DISLIKE ME EVEN MORE!!

USAGI...
GREAT-GRANDPA...
I'M READY TO GO HOME!!

GREETINGS
Hello! Ue-Rin here.
I'm going to continue the "Ue-Rin's Manga School" from the last volume.
Last time, we ended with Ue-Rin sending in her manga for the first time...
...and the result was.

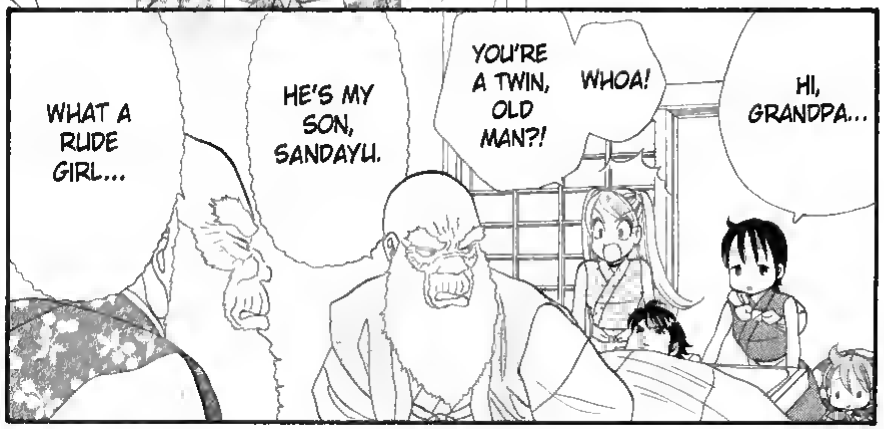
IT DOESN'T HELP YOU LOSE WEIGHT, BUT IT DOES HELP YOU FEEL REFRESHED. ENJOY IT WITH THE OTHERS.
OH, HANZOU...
...YOU CAN HAVE THE TEA I MADE.

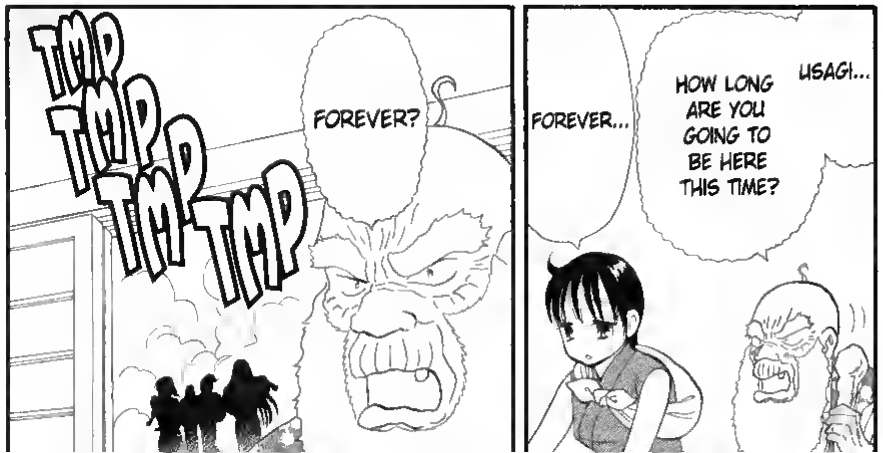
OOF
HEY USAGI, YOU SHOULD HELP WITH CARRYING GOEMON, TOO.
OOF
Sorry, Master...
TMP
BYE!!
TMP

TP
STOP...
...CLOUDING MY MIND...
DON'T YOU NEED TO GO HOME, YURI?
NOPE!
I'M GOING TO TAKE CARE OF GOEMON.
USA...
YOU'RE NOT MARRYING HANZO ANYMORE?
YEAH ...

ZWAK
HANZO!
IF YOU'RE GOING TO GO AFTER HER, NOW'S THE TIME TO DO IT!
I'M WORKING RIGHT NOW.
BUT THAT CAN WAIT, CAN'T IT?!
BUT I'M FINALLY BACK TO AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE I CAN WORK IN SILENCE.
HURRY UP AND GO AFTER HER!!
...
THEN WHY DON'T YOU MARRY YOUR JOB!!
ZWAK!

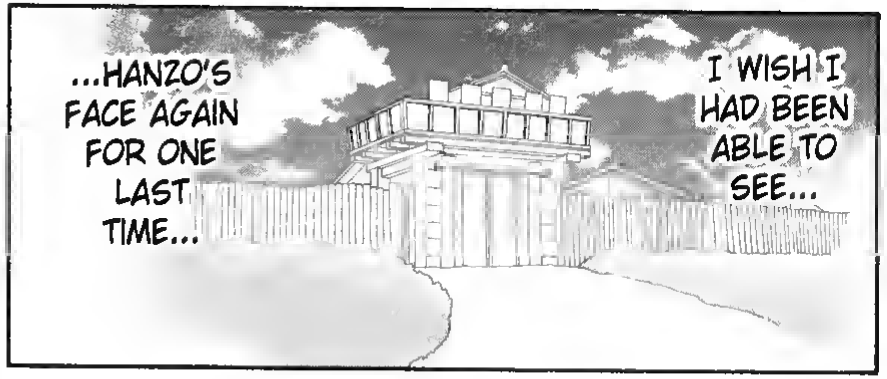
USAGI...
WELCOME HOME.
HOJIRO


WHAT A RUDE GIRL...
HE'S MY SON, SANDAYU.
YOU'RE A TWIN, OLD MAN?!
WHOA!
HI, GRANDPA...


TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP
FOREVER?
FOREVER...
HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO BE HERE THIS TIME?
USAGI...

USAGI...
I'M SORRY, USA...
ONCE YOU'RE BACK AT THE VILLAGE, YOU CAN EAT SOME DELICIOUS FOOD AND CHEER UP.

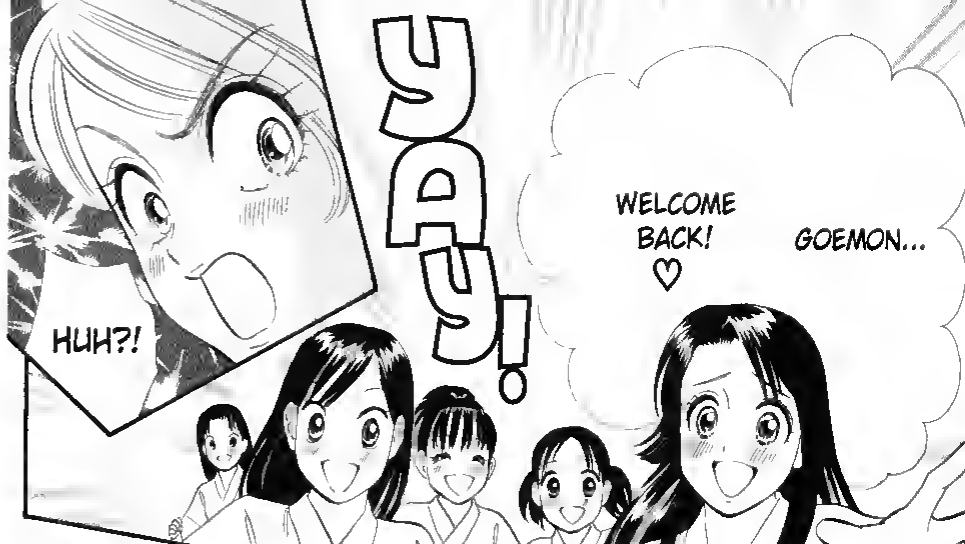
A PLACE WHERE I EXPERIENCED MUCH HAPPINESS AND SADNESS...
HANZO'S HOUSE...


...HANZO'S FACE AGAIN FOR ONE LAST TIME...
I WISH I HAD BEEN ABLE TO SEE...

IF THIS WAS HANZO'S KITCHEN, I'D KNOW WHERE EVERYTHING WAS...
Not here either.
COME TO THINK OF IT... I WAS BORN HERE, BUT I'VE NEVER USED THIS KITCHEN BEFORE...
WHERE'S THE RICE?
UM...

I FOUND THE RICE.
USA...

USA...?
TMP TMP TMP


HUH?!
ソよッ!
WELCOME BACK! ♡
GOEMON...

HEEEEY...
NO, I'LL...
I'LL LOOK AFTER YOU.
GOEMON'S MINE...!!
Usagi
SHOVE
OHH...
YOU LOOK JUST AWFUL, GOEMON!!
Oww
USA...I'M STARVING...
LET'S COOK SOMETHING, SHALL WE?
BICKER BICKER
WHOA!

BUT I CAN'T GO BACK ANYMORE...

SNIFF...

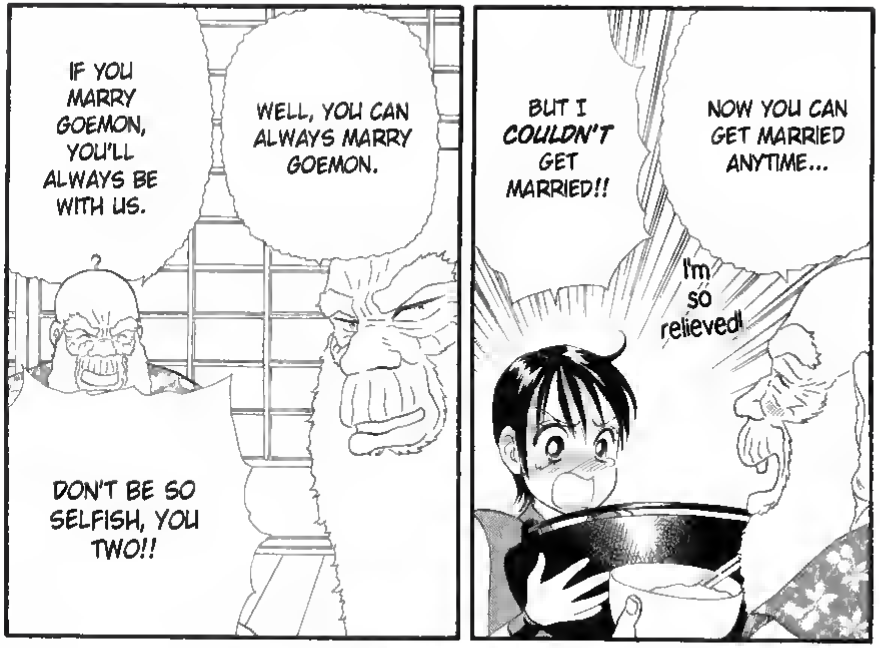
"DON'T ASSUME TO KNOW YOUR OWN LIMITS!!"

HANZO...

"YOU ARE GOING TO BE QUALIFIED AS A NINJA AND BECOME MY WIFE."

MY HOME IS WHERE HANZO IS.

"HOME IS WHERE I AM, USAGI."


IF YOU MARRY GOEMON, YOU'LL ALWAYS BE WITH US.
WELL, YOU CAN ALWAYS MARRY GOEMON.
DON'T BE SO SELFISH, YOU TWO!!
BUT I COULDN'T GET MARRIED!!
NOW YOU CAN GET MARRIED ANYTIME...
I'm so relieved!

I'M NOT HUNGRY...
SIGH...

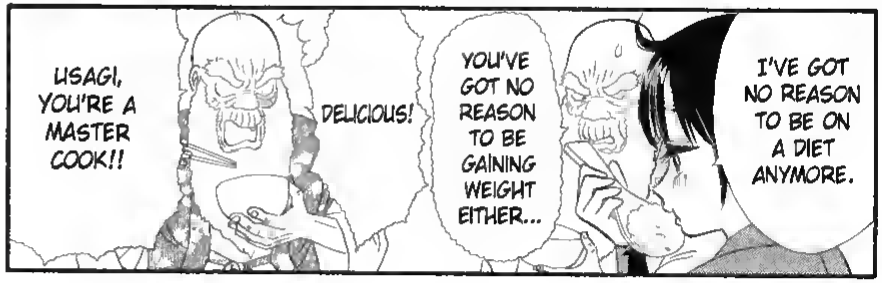
GOEMON, I'VE BROUGHT YOU SOME FOOD...
SHIK

I CAN'T BELIEVE LISA LEFT HER FOOD...
I'LL GO TAKE SOME FOOD DOWN TO GOEMON.

I'LL HAVE THE WHOLE BUCKET.
MAMEZO...
IS THAT TRUE?!

LISA DID.
WHAT...?
WHO MADE ALL THIS DELICIOUS-LOOKING FOOD?!

WELL, SHE IS A GROWING CHILD...
LISAGI'S EATING THE WHOLE POT...
LET'S EAT...
Let's eat!


LISAGI, YOU'RE A MASTER COOK!!
DELICIOUS!
YOU'VE GOT NO REASON TO BE GAINING WEIGHT EITHER...
I'VE GOT NO REASON TO BE ON A DIET ANYMORE.

WE'VE REALLY HAD ENOUGH...
YOU'RE THE CAUSE AGAIN, USAGI?!
UH...
IT'S YOUR FAULT GOEMON'S WOUNDED IN THE FIRST PLACE, ISN'T IT?!
WE DON'T WANT YOU TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH GOEMON FROM NOW ON.
I...I'M SORRY...
STOP IT!!
USAGI HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT!
I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE WOUNDS.

THOK
WE'RE FIGHTING TO SEE WHO'S GOING TO CHANGE GOEMON'S BANDAGES!!
WHA...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
I'M NOT GOING TO LET SOME NEWCOMER DO IT!!
Hey
Stop it.
HOW DARE YOU SAY THAT TO ME?

NO NEED TO FIGHT?!
It's dangerous, you guys...
THERE'S NO NEED TO FIGHT...

HUH...
THEY'RE NOT BEING MEAN TO ME.
THEN WHY DO YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE ABOUT TO CRY?
DO I?
GRAB
FOR GOD'S SAKE...
GOEMON...

BUT...
GET OUT.
I'LL HAVE USAGI CHANGE THE BANDAGES.
YOUR FOOD'S READY, SO WHY DON'T YOU GO EAT?
WHAT ABOUT ME...?
DEJECTED
OH... OKAY...
I'll change the bandages first
I WON'T TOLERATE ANYONE BEING MEAN TO YOU!
GOEMON...
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO BE SO HARSH WITH THEM...
FINE, BUT I GET TO CHANGE THE BANDAGES NEXT...
TMP
TMP

THE RAIN'S BOUND TO STOP, RIGHT?
YOU'LL FEEL A LOT BETTER ONCE YOU CRY IT ALL OUT.
WAARGH...
WAARGH...

WHA...
'CAUSE YOU'RE CRYING.
SNORT
WHAT WAS THAT FOR?!
DOOK

WAAAAARGH
WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME CRYING...!!
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH IT.
YOU'VE DONE NOTHING WRONG, USAGI.
There, there.
WHARGH
HANZO'S...

YOU JUST NEED TO BE LOOKING AT ME...
LOOK AT ME.
I'M YOUR SUN, USAGI.

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE HANZO IN 'WINTER SONATA.'♡"

-SUZUZOU, FUKUSHIMA PREFECTURE

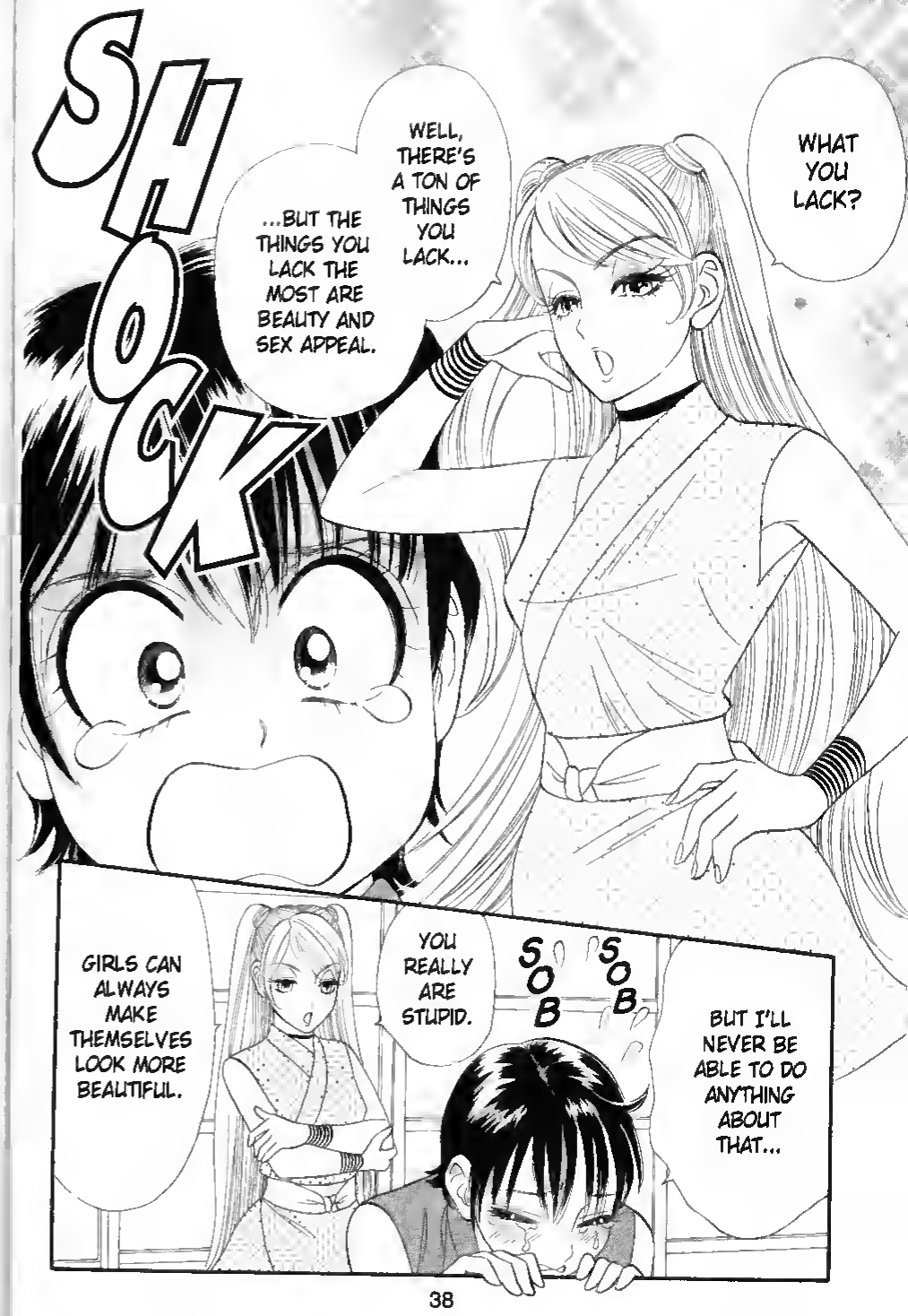
I'M...
...GOING TO SHAVE MY HEAD BALD AND BECOME A NUN!!
HUH?
Hey, you've got a cut on your forehead.
OWWW
I'M GOING TO LIVE ALL ALONE AND HOLD A SERVICE FOR MY FEELINGS FOR HANZO!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
NANMAIDA...
NANMAIDA...
OW...
OWW...

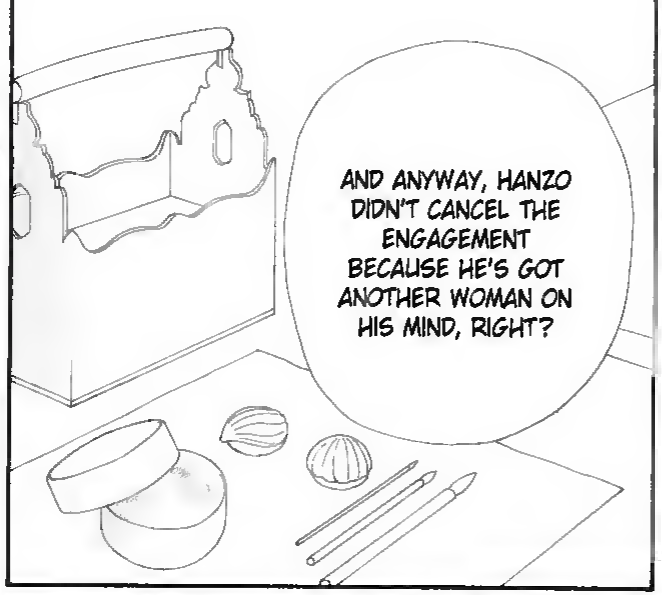
YOU JUST NEED TO BE LOOKING AT ME...
STOP IT!!
THUNK
URGH

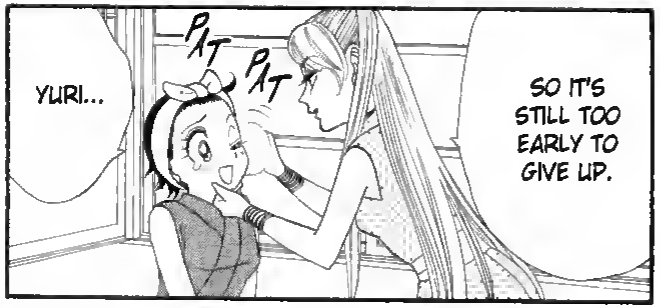
HANZO'S PERFECT.
MAYBE I'M JUST NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR HIM...
WELL, HANZO IS PERFECT!!
COME ON, NOBODY'S PERFECT.
HANZO'S PERFECT?!
THEN THINK ABOUT IT BY YOURSELF!!
I'm going to sleep
YOU'RE FINE THE WAY YOU ARE, USAGI.
WHAT IS IT THAT I LACK?!
GOEMON...
BUT THAT WON'T DO...!!

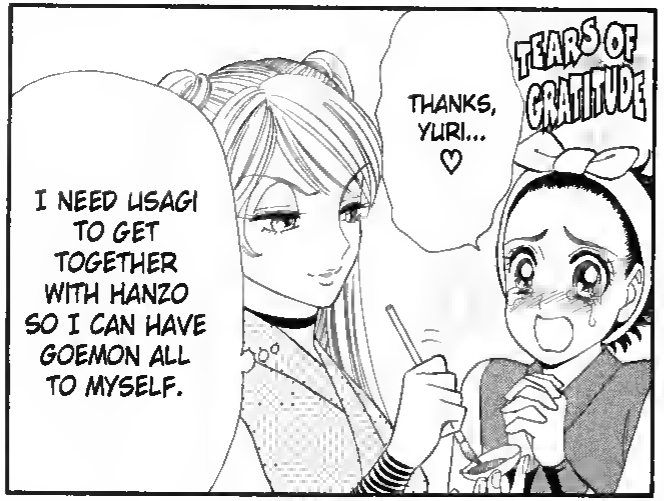
I can do some needle-work, too
I LEARNED HOW TO COOK AND CLEAN...
BUT...
IF YOU'VE GOT THE GUTS TO SHAVE YOUR HEAD, WHY DON'T YOU WORK HARD AT TRYING TO MAKE HANZO PAY ATTENTION TO YOU?
I DID TRY HARD!!
HE'S THE ONLY ONE I CAN THINK OF!!
I'M IN LOVE WITH HANZO...
OH FOR CRYIN'...

...DECIDED TO BREAK OFF THE ENGAGEMENT...
BUT HANZO...
BUT WHAT?









UE-RIN'S WAY OF THE MANGA ⑥

My first work was...

REJECTED

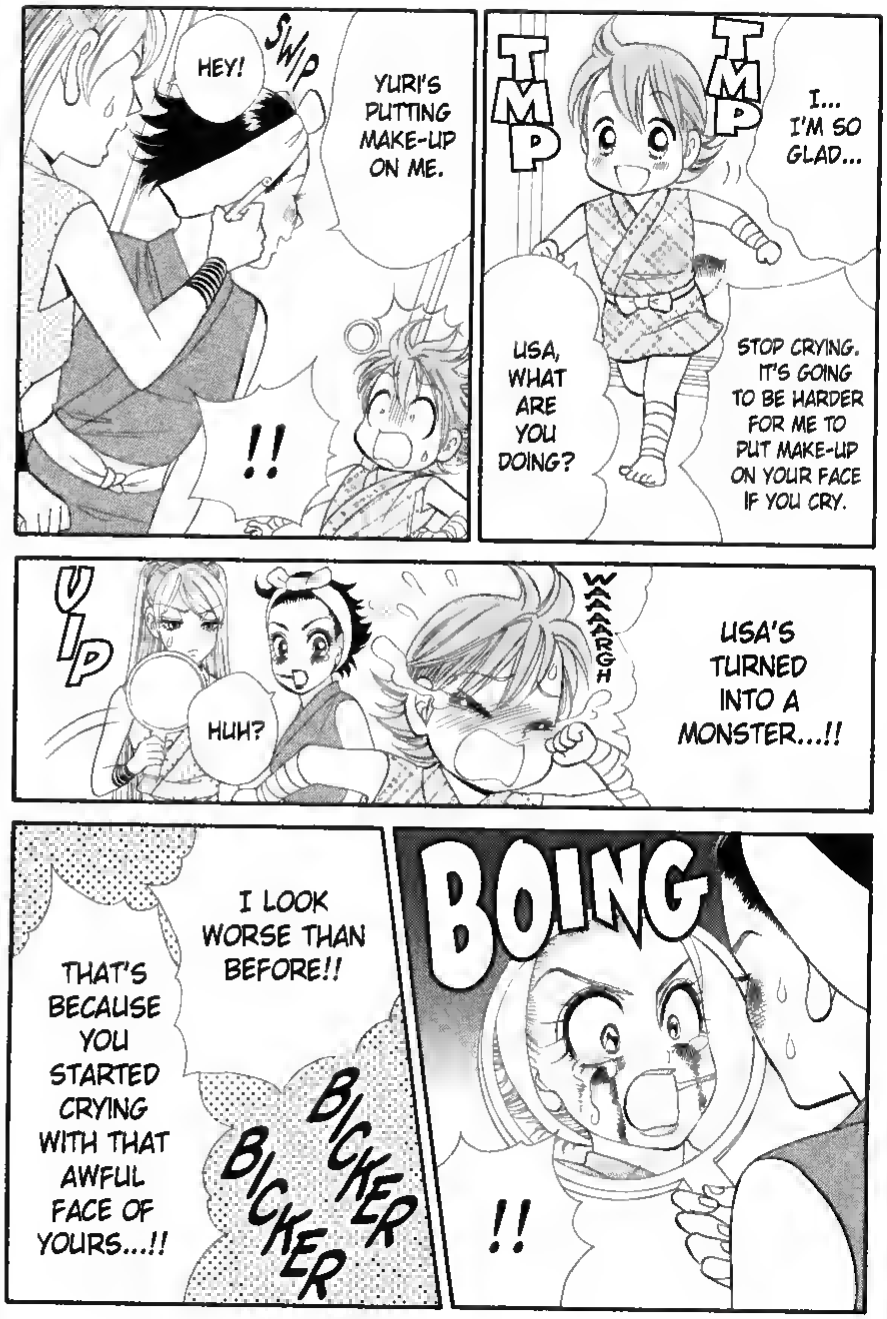
SHOCK

The reality hit Ue-Rin right in the face.
Ue-Rin was forced to realize her lack of skills

I wasn't sad, but I was frustrated

However, the "Manga School" I sent my work to was a special edition where a brief comment and an image from the work of all the people who applied were printed in the magazine.
So even though my work was rejected, I was really happy to see a small image of it in print

HOP
MAYBE THE EASIEST WAY TO GET TO HANZO IS TO PRACTICE EVERY DAY AND BECOME QUALIFIED...
You can do it, Usa...
SIGH...
THE NEXT DAY
TMP TMP TMP
"IT'S YOUR TREE, USAGI."
HANZO'S PROBABLY NOTICED IT BY NOW...
THE BROKEN SEEDLING...
YIKES
GRAGK
HE'S GOING TO HATE ME EVEN MORE AFTER SEEING IT...
HOP


HEY!
SWIP
YURI'S PUTTING MAKE-UP ON ME.
!!
TMP TMP
I... I'M SO GLAD...
USA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
STOP CRYING. IT'S GOING TO BE HARDER FOR ME TO PUT MAKE-UP ON YOUR FACE IF YOU CRY.
VIP
HUH?
WAAAAGH
USA'S TURNED INTO A MONSTER...!!
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU STARTED CRYING WITH THAT AWFUL FACE OF YOURS...!!
I LOOK WORSE THAN BEFORE!!
BICKER BICKER
BOING
!!

TROMP
TROMP
"NOOO, DON'T TELL HIM, GREAT-GRANDPA...!!"
SO THIS IS WHAT SHE WAS TALKING ABOUT...

SWIFTLY...
MOVE SWIFTLY...
TUP
MASTER HANZO...
TROMP
TROMP
I SEE THAT EVERYONE'S WORKING HARD.
WE NEVER KNOW WHEN ODA'S ARMY WILL STRIKE NEXT.
I'LL HAVE THEM START ATTENDING FIELD EXERCISES, TOO.
GOOD.
I THINK THE SENIOR STUDENTS ARE READY TO BE QUALIFIED.
SOUNDS FINE.

I'LL DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT...
I'LL GO WITH YOU...
MAYBE I'LL ASK HANZO ABOUT IT.
ISN'T IT OBVIOUS THAT HE'D OBJECT?!
NO...
YOU'RE PREGNANT, SARA.
YOU HAVE TO STAY INSIDE WHERE IT'S SAFE!!
HANZOU...
DON'T WORRY. I'LL MANAGE SOMEHOW.

AND IT'S A SECRET THAT YOU'RE EVEN LIVING IN IGA...
WE CAN'T JUST TAKE USAGI WITH US.
BUT THINK ABOUT IT...
DON'T RAISE YOUR VOICE.
HANZOU ...?
ARE YOU SERIOUS?!

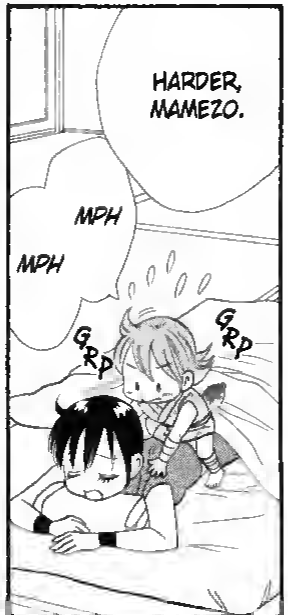
SPRING
SOMEONE'S OVER THERE.
SHUSH
WHAT'S WRONG?
I DON'T SEE ANYBODY.
I KNOW.
WHY DON'T WE GET SOMEBODY TO TAKE HER PLACE?!
HE'D NEVER FALL FOR THAT.
BUT I FELT SOMEONE'S PRESENCE...

DID YOU RUB SOME OINTMENT ON IT?
MY SPRAINED ANKLE IS BEGINNING TO HURT AGAIN, SO I'M GOING TO REST UP...
I DID.
AREN'T YOU GOING TO PRACTICE YOUR JUMPS TODAY...?
USA...
SLUGGISH

OKAY!
MAMEZO, CAN YOU GIVE ME A MASSAGE?
AND MY NECK'S REALLY STIFF, TOO...

I NEVER KNEW YOU COULD SOUND SO SEXY.

OOOH...
THAT'S IT... ♡
4LEED


HARDER, MAMEZO.
MPH
MPH
GRP
GRP

THIS TEA HAS SUCH A LOVELY ROASTED SCENT.

IT TASTES GOOD ENOUGH TO BE SOLD AT A SHOP THOUGH...
I SHOULD HAVE ASKED HER HOW SHE MADE IT.
SHE ORIGINALLY WANTED TO MAKE A WEIGHT-LOSS TEA BUT ENDED UP WITH THIS INSTEAD.
SO THIS IS THE TEA USAGI MADE...

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE SOME OF USAGI'S TEA?
A BATH, HUH?

I'M A LITTLE BUSY RIGHT NOW...
TELL HANZO I'M GOING BACK TO HAMAMATSU AND WON'T BE BACK FOR A WHILE.

HEY...
IS HANZO AROUND?
MASTER HANZO'S GONE TO TAKE A BATH.

THERE'S A MAN WHO'S TAKEN A GREAT LIKING TO YOUR TEA, USAGI...
OH...
SPROING
IS IT HANZO?!
NO.
SHONE
TCH!
...THERE'S SOMEBODY WHO'D LIKE TO SEE YOU, USAGI...
AS A MATTER OF FACT...

NO, NOT THERE!
MAMEZO...
...AND YOU MAY BE SURPRISED TO HEAR WHO IT IS, BUT...
I AM LISTENING...
LISTEN TO ME!!
GRP
GRP
HIGHER, MAMEZO.

...LORD ODA NOBUNAGA.
Oooh, that's it.
THE PRINCESS'S FATHER IS...
SARA'S FATHER WANTS TO SEE YOU.

I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D DROP BY MY PLACE.
YOU CAUGHT ME BY SURPRISE.
IMP
IMP
I KNOW.
HERE'S SOME TEA.

YOUR TEA'S BECOME QUITE A HIT, USAGI.
THANKS!

NO...
HE ONLY DRINKS HOT WATER.
HAS HANZO TRIED IT, TOO?!

HANZOU ?!
HIYA!

NO WAY!!
I DON'T WANT TO DIE YET!!
NEVER!
HE'S OUR ENEMY!!
ENEMY, I SAY!
A...A REALLY SCARY LORD WHO HATES NINJA!!
WHO'S THAT?
YOU CAN HIDE YOUR IDENTITY AND MEET HIM...
...USAGI.
GO...
NOOO...
I'LL GO WITH YOU.
GET CLOSE TO NOBUNAGA...
...AND FIND OUT WHAT THE SITUATION IS IN AZUCHI.
GREAT-GRANDPA ?!

HUH...
SARA SENT SOME OF YOUR TEA DOWN TO AZUCHI, AND LORD NOBUNAGA LIKED IT A LOT.
HE WANTS TO MEET THE PERSON WHO MADE IT.
WHOA
ODA NOBUNAGA WANTS TO SEE ME?!
WHAAAAAT
!!!...

YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY ANYTHING, USAGI.
JUST LEAVE EVERY-THING TO ME.
OHHH
JUST YOU WAIT AND SEE, NOBU-NAGA...
I'LL GO SEE NOBUNAGA AND GET MY QUALIFICATION!!
OKAY!
WELL SAID!!
IT'S NOT NOBUNAGA, BUT "LORD NOBUNAGA," OKAY?!
I CAN'T LET YOU DO THIS, HANZOU.

TH... THAT'S RIGHT!!
I BET HANZO WOULD BE REALLY IMPRESSED IF HE FOUND OUT YOU QUALIFIED AS A NINJA!!
QUALIFICA-TION...?
I CAN'T DO THAT!!
...I'M WILLING TO GIVE YOU YOUR QUALIFICATION.
IF YOU CAN SUCCESSFULLY ACCOMPLISH THIS BIG TASK...
...WILL BE IMPRESSED WITH ME...
HANZO...
MULL

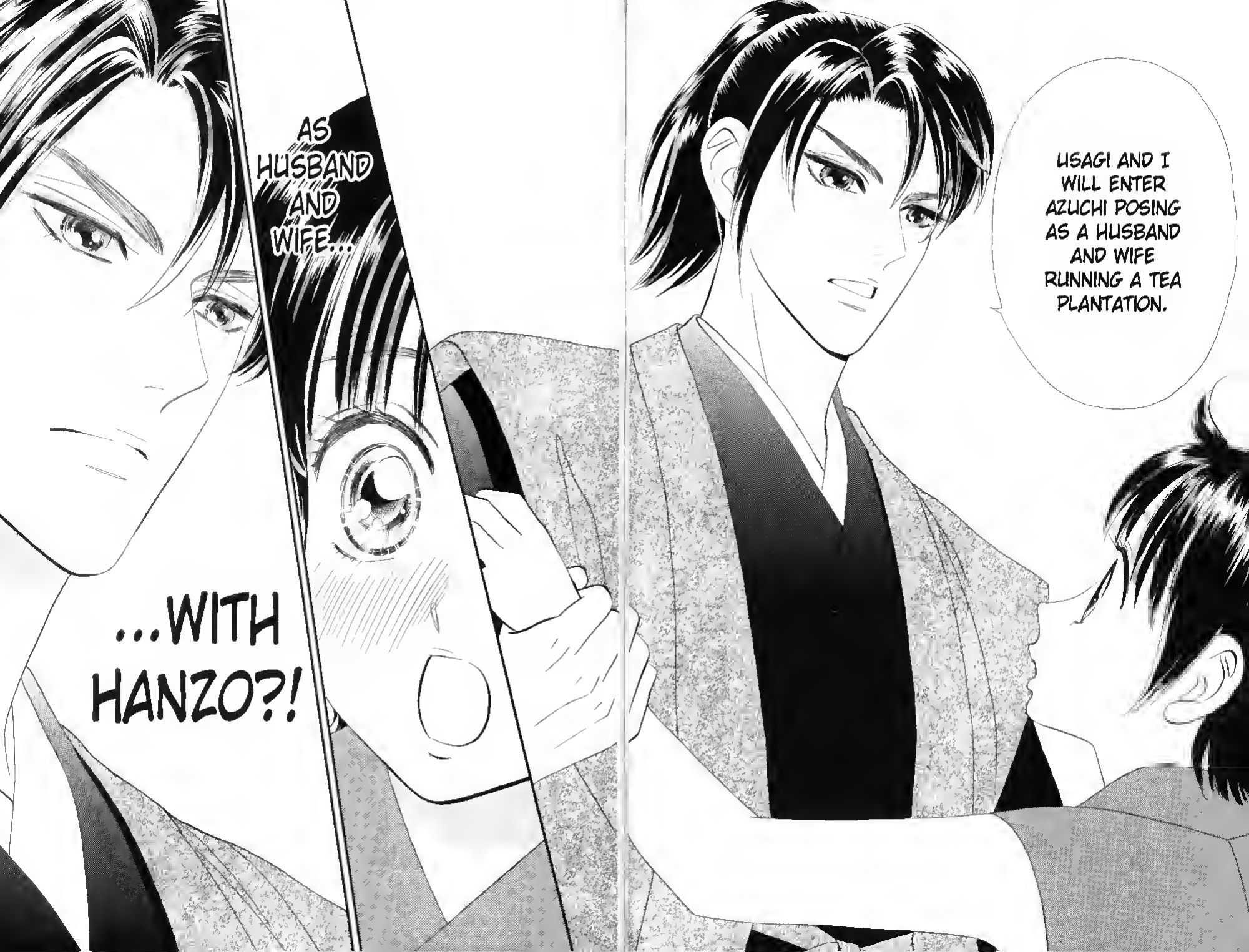
HANZO, WHEN DID YOU...
I CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH EVERYTHING YOU DO, HANZOU.

YOU'RE COMING WITH ME...?
THIS IS THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO FIND OUT NOBUNAGA'S TRUE INTENTIONS OF ATTACKING IGA.

I'LL GO TOO...
TUG
JUST USAGI AND I WILL BE FINE.
OH...

I'LL ACCOMPANY HER TO AZUCHI.
HANZO?!

HAN...
...ZO...?


USAGI AND I WILL ENTER AZUCHI POSING AS A HUSBAND AND WIFE RUNNING A TEA PLANTATION.
AS HUSBAND AND WIFE...
...WITH HANZO?!

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE HANZO IN A LITTLE LEAGUE LOOK." ♡

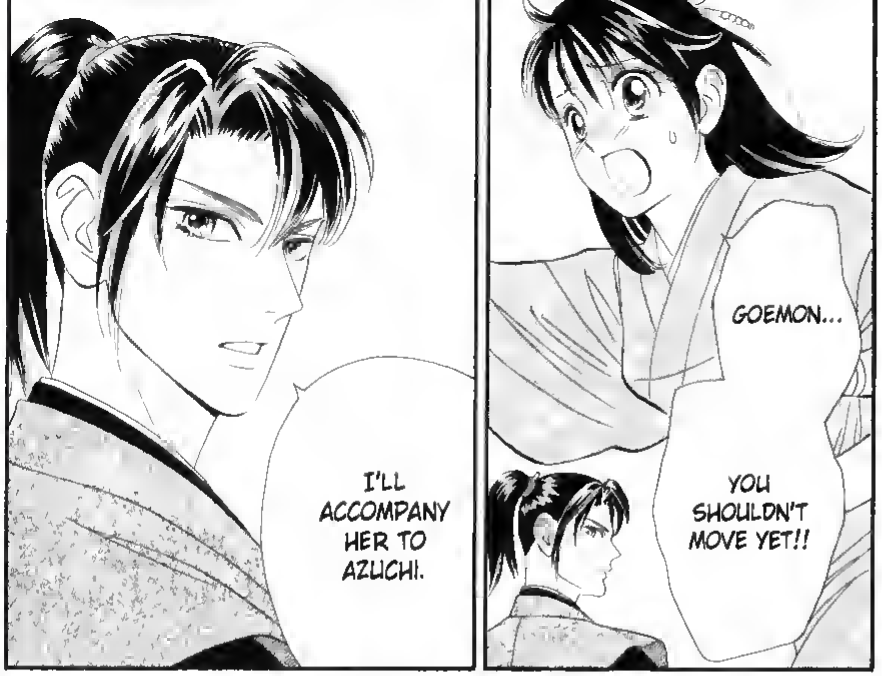
-KYAKYA, SAITAMA PREFECTURE

"USAGI AND I WILL ENTER AZUCHI POSING AS A HUSBAND AND WIFE RUNNING A TEA PLANTATION."

IF HE'S ACCOMPANYING YOU, THEN THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, USAGI!!
THAT'S GREAT!!
UM...
...CHANGE INTO THIS.
USAGI...
SWUP
GREAT-GRANDPA...
YOU LOOK THE OTHER WAY, HANZOU.
I'LL UNDRESS YOU. ♪
HURRY UP AND GET CHANGED.
"GOOD DEEDS SHOULD BE DONE WITHOUT HESITATION."
HUH?!
WAAAARGH
WHAT'S WRONG, USA...?!
TMP
TMP
AAAAAAH!

...PRETEND TO BE HANZO'S WIFE...
You started off with how the two met each other?!
Of course
I CAN'T...
THE FAMILY
HANBEI
YEAR 8
THE TWO
OTHER SINCE
FROM HELPING
PLANTATION
I'LL ASSUME THE NAME OF "HANBEI." USAGI, YOU'LL BE "KAYO."
HANZO, WHEN DID YOU MAKE THIS?
WE'LL START CALLING EACH OTHER BY THOSE NAMES FROM NOW ON.
YOU SURE ARE A HARD WORKER...
WE JUST BROKE OFF OUR ENGAGE-MENT...
...THAT'S HOW IT GOES.
DID YOU GET THAT, "KAYO"...?

MAMEZO...
USAGI AND I WILL BE AWAY FOR A WHILE.
MA... MAMEZO...
YOU LOOK SO PRETTY, USA! ♪
TAKE THIS WITH YOU.
GNCH
USAGI...
FAMILY HISTORY?!
SWIP
BEFORE WE LEAVE, MAKE SURE YOU KNOW THE FAMILY HISTORY OF THE COUPLE WE'RE GOING TO BE PORTRAYING.
...JUST AROUND JU... THE CORNER...
GASP...
GASP...
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, USA?


I'LL ACCOMPANY HER TO AZUCHI.
GOEMON...
YOU SHOULDN'T MOVE YET!!

IT'S TOO DANGEROUS TO TAKE USAGI TO AZUCHI!!
DAMN YOU...
YOU ALWAYS APPEAR WHEN THINGS ARE CONVENIENT FOR YOU...
IT'S OKAY...
...GOEMON.

I THINK IT'S A LITTLE TOO HARD FOR USAGI.
YOU'RE TO RESPOND AT ONCE!!
THAT'S YOUR NAME.
WHY DON'T YOU JUST CALL HER USAGI?
MY NAME?!
B-BUMP B-BUMP

JOLT
KAYO!!
WHOA

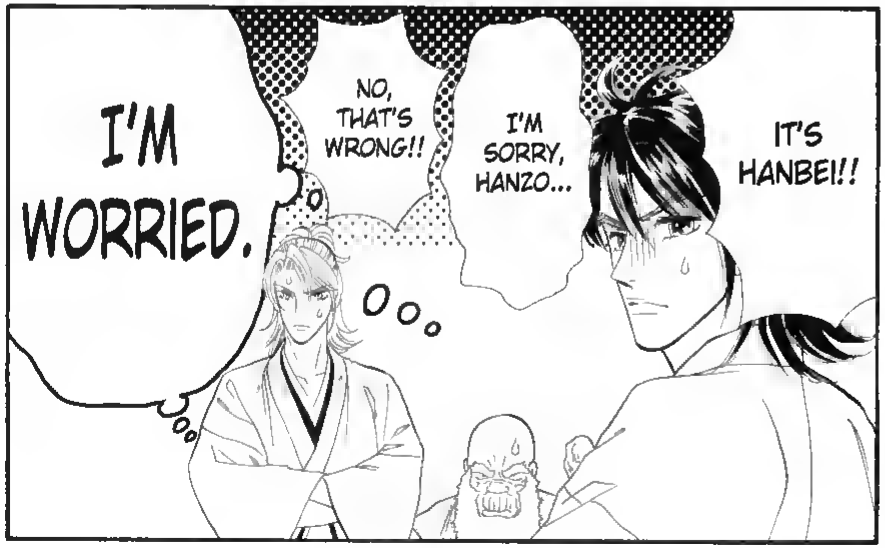
GIVE IT A TRY.
BUT YOU MUST CALL ME "HANBEI."
THEN...I'LL CALL YOU BY YOUR NAME, USAGI.

USAGI!!
ZWAK
HANZO...
OK...
TAKE THE "MASTER" OFF!!
BLUSH
M...MASTER HANBEI?
BUMP

I HEARD YOU'RE GOING TO AZUCHI...
IS THAT TRUE?!
GOEMON?!

I WILL.

HANZO!!
YE... YES...
LET'S GO.


I'M WORRIED.
NO, THAT'S WRONG!!
I'M SORRY, HANZO...
IT'S HANBEI!!

SO...
IF I SUCCEED, I'M GOING TO BE QUALIFIED AS A NINJA!!
ALL RIGHT...

...TAKE CARE OF USAGI FOR ME.
HANZO...

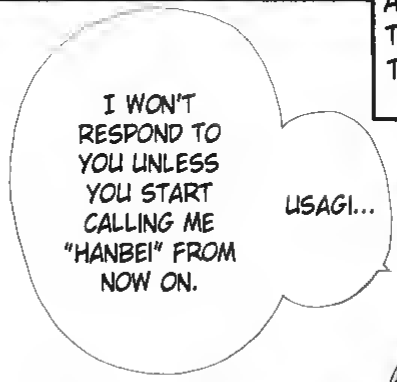
IT'LL BE TOUGH FOR YOU TO CROSS THE MOUNTAINS WITH THAT LEG OF YOURS.
GET ON MY BACK.

LIKE HUSBAND AND WIFE...

...BUT I NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE GOING THERE WITH HANZO...
HUFF
HUFF

I WAS READY TO GO TO AZUCHI...

AND ON TOP OF THAT...


I WON'T RESPOND TO YOU UNLESS YOU START CALLING ME "HANBEI" FROM NOW ON.
USAGI...

...AS HUSBAND AND WIFE...

SHA
PANT...
PANT...

I SPRAINED MY FOOT... WHEN I WAS PRACTICING... JUMPING OVER IT...
THE SEEDLING...
WHY ARE YOU WALKING SO SLOWLY?!
!!
M... MY LEG HURTS...
WHEEZE
WHEEZE

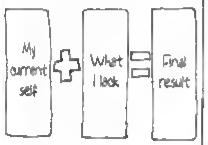
WE'LL DROP BY UJI BEFORE GOING TO AZUCHI.
...MAYBE HE'LL BE KINDER TO ME...
OF COURSE.
WE...WE HAVE TO DO THAT?!
WE'RE GOING TO VISIT A REAL TEA PLANTATION IN UJI.
UJI?!
...SO WE MUST BE READY TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS HE ASKS US ABOUT IT.
I HEAR THAT NOBUNAGA KNOWS A LOT ABOUT TEA...
RIGHT...

HOLD ON TIGHTER.
O... OKAY.
CLUTCH
I HAVE TO ACT LIKE HIS WIFE...
SO, FOR THE DURATION OF THIS TRIP...

UE-RIN'S WAY OF THE MANGA ⑦

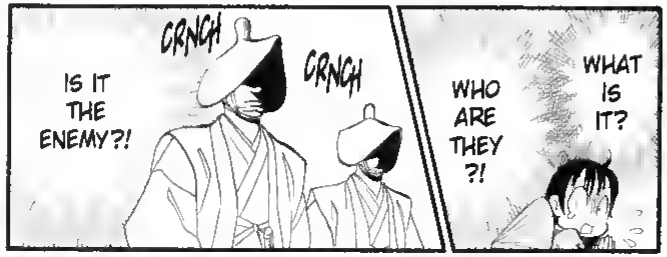
"Making my debut with the first manga I sent" ♪

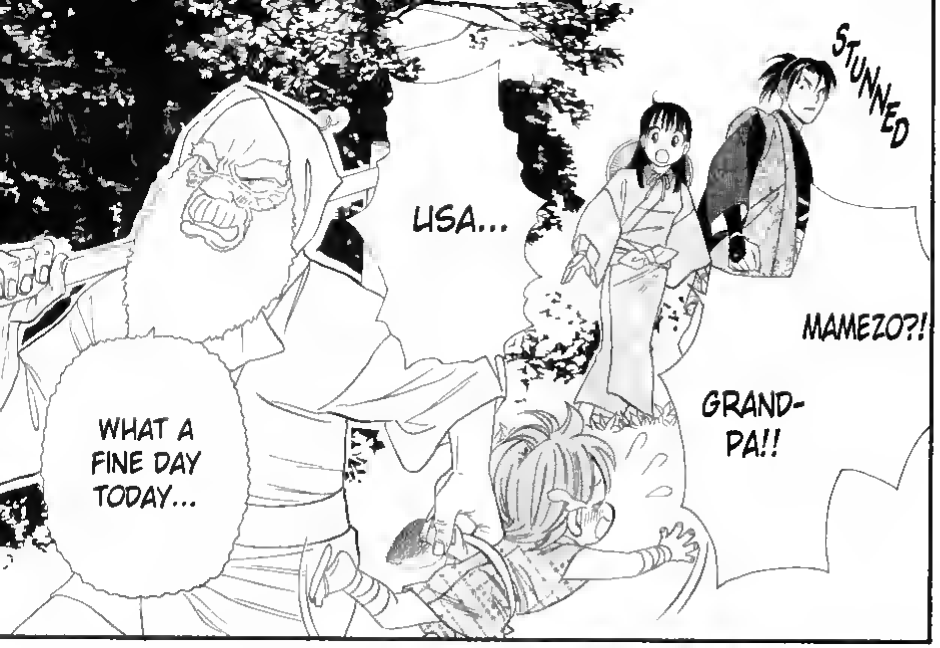
Not only did that dream not come true, but I was faced with a huge sense of loss as well I decided to take a good look at the reason behind my failure



Though I was one of the better drawers at school, there were a lot of people who were far better than me out in the world Even if I work ten times as hard as those people, I may never be able to get half as good as them but I'll do what I can!!

Come to think of it, I was a pretty passionate middle schooler




STUNNED
USA...
MAMEZO?!
GRAND-PA!!
WHAT A FINE DAY TODAY...

DIG
DIG
I'M LOOKING FOR TREA-SURE.
CAN'T YOU TELL?
MASTER SANDAYU, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE...?

MAMEZO...
DON'T WORRY.
AH!

I WANT TO TAKE YOU WITH ME, BUT IT'S DANGER-OUS...
USA...
TAKE ME WITH YOU!!
WAARGH

I DIDN'T GIVE YOU ANY ORDERS TO GO OUTSIDE ON AN ASSIGNMENT.
WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO OUR ASSIGNMENT AS WELL...
B-BUMP
B-BUMP

BU...
SNIFF

MA...
...MASTER HANZO!!
WHA... WHAT A COINCI-DENCE...

I DON'T NEED ANY HELP!!
LET US ACCOMPANY YOU!!
WAAARGH
BUT WE HEARD THAT YOU WERE GOING DOWN TO AZUCHI...
GO HOME.

HEY...
LOWER YOUR VOICE!!
FOR GOD'S SAKE...
I KIND OF FEEL SORRY FOR THEM...
DEJECTED
IT'S USA...

USA...I'LL BE A GOOD BOY AND WAIT FOR YOU...
BOO HOO
YOU'VE GOT TO COME BACK ALIVE...
I CAN WALK!!
TMP
TMP
I...I'M FINE NOW.
I SHOULDN'T BE TOO DEPENDENT ON HIM!!
THIS IS AN ASSIGNMENT.
TMP
TMP
SHA
GET ON.

I'LL PROTECT USAGI WITH EVERYTHING I HAVE.
I PROMISE WE'LL COME BACK TO IGA SAFELY.
...BECAUSE IT'S AN ASSIGNMENT.
HE SAID THOSE WORDS...
SO BE A GOOD BOY AND WAIT FOR US.
OKAY...

NIGHT FALLS
YOU'RE NOT FINE AT ALL.
TROMP
TROMP
IF YOU'D LET ME CARRY YOU ON MY BACK, WE WOULD HAVE ARRIVED MUCH EARLIER!!
TROMP
WORN OUT
TROMP
I'M SORRY...
WE'RE GOING TO REST FOR THE DAY AND VISIT THE TEA PLANTATION TOMORROW.
NNKAY...

YOU MUST BE TIRED FROM YOUR JOURNEY.
DEAD TIRED
PANT
PANT
NO, THANK YOU.
WILL YOU BE HAVING DINNER?

SHE'S MY WIFE.
ARE YOU TWO SIBLINGS?

ONE FUTON WILL BE FINE.
JOLT
WHA–
Please follow me
I SUSPECT THAT YOU'LL ONLY BE NEEDING ONE FUTON SET THEN.
I APOLOGIZE FOR MY MISTAKE.

HURRY UP.
TROMP
TROMP
I'M GOING TO SLEEP WITH HANZO...?!
THIS IS A PROBLEM.
WELL NOW...

I AM LOOKING AT YOU...
I...
WHY WON'T YOU LOOK AT MY EYES WHEN YOU'RE SPEAKING?
...
REALLY...

WHAT DO YOU THINK, USAGI?
WHA...
WHAT I THINK...?
Two pillows

WE SHOULD BEHAVE MORE LIKE A MARRIED COUPLE...
MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING I'M NOT DOING RIGHT.

USAGI...

...IT'S TOO HARD FOR ME TO PRETEND TO BE YOUR WIFE AFTER CANCELLING OUR ENGAGEMENT...
E...EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE TO ACT LIKE A MARRIED COUPLE...

FWUMP
AAH!
HANBEI...
FOR THE SAKE OF THIS ASSIGN-MENT...
...I'M GOING TO MAKE LOVE TO YOU.

I'M HANBEI.
I'M NOT HANZO.
TH-THUM
HA... HANZO...?!
TH-THUMP

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE HANZO IN A CARPENTER'S OUTFIT!"

-"MAMEZO IS SO CUTE," SAGA PREFECTURE

"FOR THE SAKE OF THIS ASSIGNMENT, I'M GOING TO MAKE LOVE TO YOU."

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE HANZO AND HANZOU MAKING PASSES AT GIRLS!!"

-AKIZAKURA, KUMAMOTO PREFECTURE

NO!
BUT HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY FEELINGS FOR ME.
"THIS WAS AN UNWANTED ENGAGEMENT FOR ME FROM THE START."
NOOO!
CAN HANZO DO SUCH A THING IF IT'S FOR AN ASSIGNMENT?!
SNIFF
SNIFF
ARE YOU THAT UNWILLING?

NOT AS HANZO...
...BUT AS HANBEI ...?!
!!

USAGI...
YOU MAY BE PERFECT AT EVERY-THING...
HANZO...
...BUT I CAN'T BE THAT WAY...
I'M...
...PERFECT?!

OF COURSE I'M UN-WILLING!!
THE ONE I'M IN LOVE WITH IS HANZO!!
I...
...CAN'T CONTINUE ON THIS ASSIGNMENT... ANYMORE.

I'M SORRY...
...I MADE THINGS PAINFUL FOR YOU, USAGI.
THERE WAS A TIME...
...WHEN I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR YOU TO MARRY GOEMON...
THAT...
BUT...

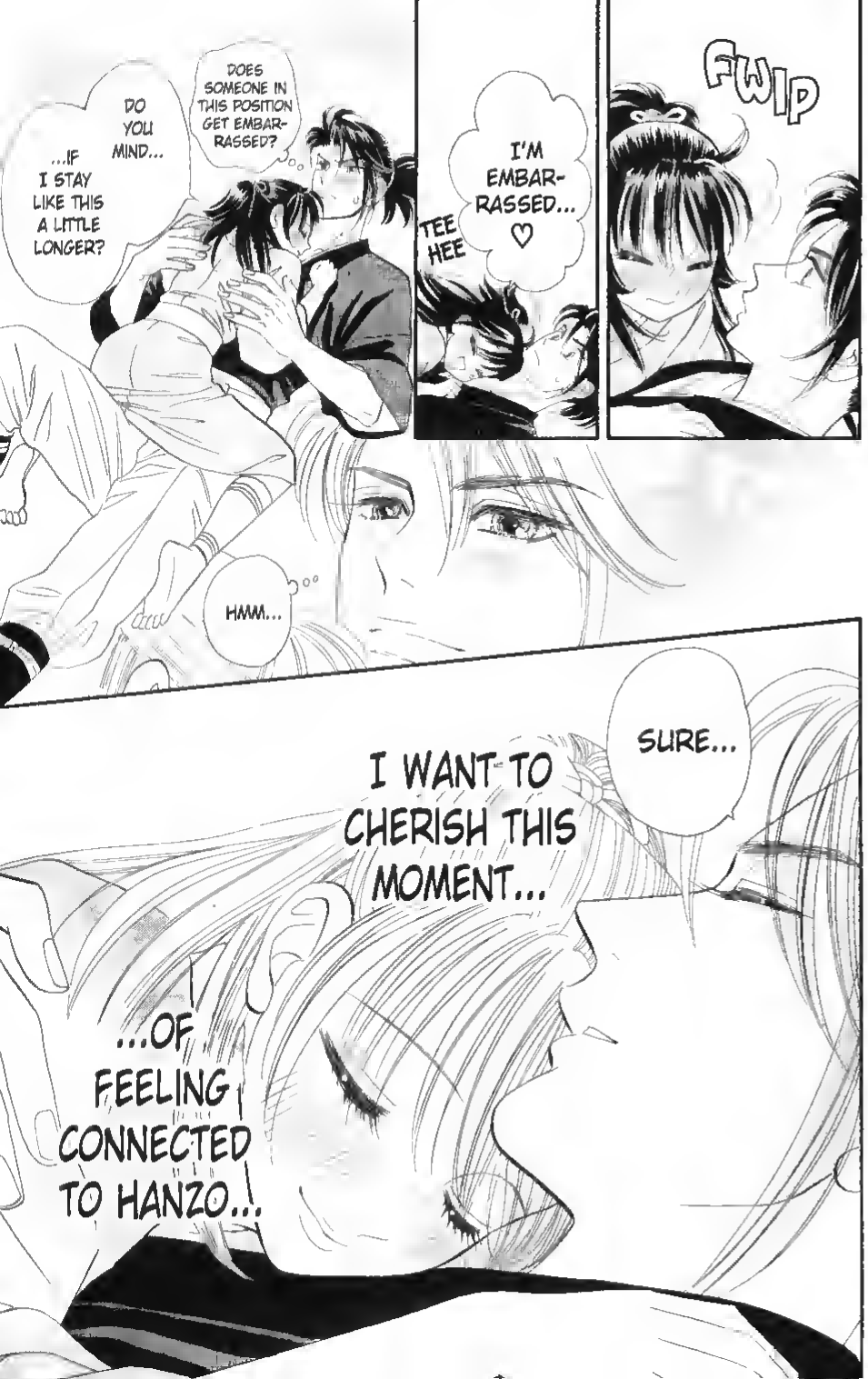
I REGRET WHAT I DID...
A PERFECT PERSON...
...WOULDN'T HAVE ACCEPTED MASTER TANBA'S REQUEST TO CANCEL THE ENGAGEMENT.

ONCE THIS ASSIGNMENT IS OVER, I'LL PROPOSE TO YOU AGAIN.
PROPOSE...
DO YOU MIND...
...IF I HOLD YOU?

...I'M THE ONE SUITED TO MARRY YOU, USAGI!!

I LOVE YOU.
I REALLY LOVE YOU.
IF YOU'RE SCARED...
...YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO TO AZUCHI, YOU KNOW.
I'M GOING!!

HUG
SURE!!
HEY...
I LOVE YOU!!
THUD


DO YOU MIND...
...IF I STAY LIKE THIS A LITTLE LONGER?
DOES SOMEONE IN THIS POSITION GET EMBARRASSED?
TEE HEE
I'M EMBARRASSED... ♡
FWIP
HMM...
SURE...
I WANT TO CHERISH THIS MOMENT...
...OF FEELING CONNECTED TO HANZO...

I'M GOING TO FULFILL THIS MISSION...
...GET MY QUALIFICATION...
...AND BECOME YOUR WIFE, HANZO.
IS THAT RIGHT...

HM
...
ZZZ...
ZZZ...

OH WELL...
YOU REALLY ARE CUTE...
DON'T...
PANT
PANT
AH...

...FALLING APART...!!
MY RATION-ALITY IS...
THROB
THROB
OH NO...

UH...

I LOVE YOU...
HANZO...

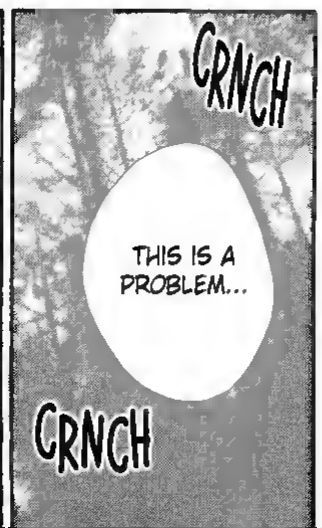
LET'S CONTINUE WITH WHAT WE WERE GOING TO DO...
GRAB
SNAP
URK!
USAGI...

EXCUSE ME...
DID YOU FORGET YOUR SWORD?
I NEVER HAD ONE FROM THE START.
SPACEY
SPACEY
THANKS FOR EVERYTHING.
INNSHIMO
TAKE CARE...
OH...

WHAT?!
I COMPLETELY ASSUMED THAT YOU WERE A SAMURAI OR SOMETHING...
IS THAT SO?

!!
DOES YOUR LEG STILL HURT?!
DID YOU SAY SOMETHING ...?
WHAAAAAT?
WHEEZE
WHEEZE

USAGI...
DON'T I LOOK LIKE A MAN WHO RUNS A TEA PLANTATION?


CRNCH
THIS IS A PROBLEM...
CRNCH

SLAM
WAKE UP!
IT'S MORNING!
NO... I'M NOT READY YET.
HUH...?
AAAH!
WHAT KIND OF DREAM WAS IT?
...A DREAM?!
WA... WAS THAT...
HEY!

I DON'T KNOW!!
WAAAARGH!
WHY DID I FALL ASLEEP...?!
Hurry up and get ready to leave!!

LAST NIGHT, HANZO MADE ADVANCEMENTS TOWARD ME...
...AND THIS AND THAT HAPPENED...
I REMEMBER!!

MUNCH MUNCH
THAT SHOULD KEEP YOU GOING FOR THE DAY.
TOSS
AAAH?
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
RE...
...REALLY?
JUST NOW, THAT LOOKED...
...AS IF WE REALLY WERE MARRIED... ♡
♡ Daze_

YOU SHOULD GET SERIOUS AND BE ON YOUR GUARD!!
WE'RE NOT GOING ON THIS TRIP FOR PLEASURE, YOU KNOW.
WAAARGH
DON'T BE STUPID.
MORE, MORE...
AAAH! ♡
YOU CAN ONLY HAVE ONE PER DAY.
CHIRP CHIRP

ONCE YOU TAKE A STEP OUT OF IGA, YOU'RE IN ENEMY TERRITORY.
BUT...
...THE INN KEEPER ISN'T OUR ENEMY...
PANT PANT

TROMP TROMP
NINJA ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO EAT ANYTHING GIVEN TO THEM BY OTHERS OUTSIDE OF THEIR TERRITORY.
...BUT I HAVEN'T EATEN BREAKFAST SO I'M STARVING...
MY...MY LEG'S FINE NOW...
WOBBLE WOBBLE

IF YOU'RE HUNGRY, HAVE A HUNGER PILL.
HE'S GOT HIS "WORK" FACE ON...
HUFF HUFF

SAY "AAAH."
BUT THEY DON'T TASTE GOOD...
HUFF...

HANZO...
I THOUGHT OUR FEELINGS FOR EACH OTHER WERE MUTUAL AT LAST, BUT HE'S THE SAME AS USUAL.
IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE INDEPENDENCE OF IGA, WE MUST SNEAK INTO AZUCHI.

UE-RIN'S WAY OF THE MANGA ⑧

Back then, I was on the swimming team, so I would swim about 3km everyday after school, go to sleep right after coming home, and draw my manga in the middle of the night after my family members had all gone to bed

I was really busy with my classes, extracurricular activities, and cram school, so finding time to draw manga was hard. I would draw manga happily until it was time for me to go to school

(This was around the time I got hooked on the radio)

I also came up with a plan to improve my skills

Plan ①

Overcome my weak points in focus lines and shadowing!

Plan ②

Draw a 30-page one-shot manga every month and submit them to magazines

Well, I only had two plans...

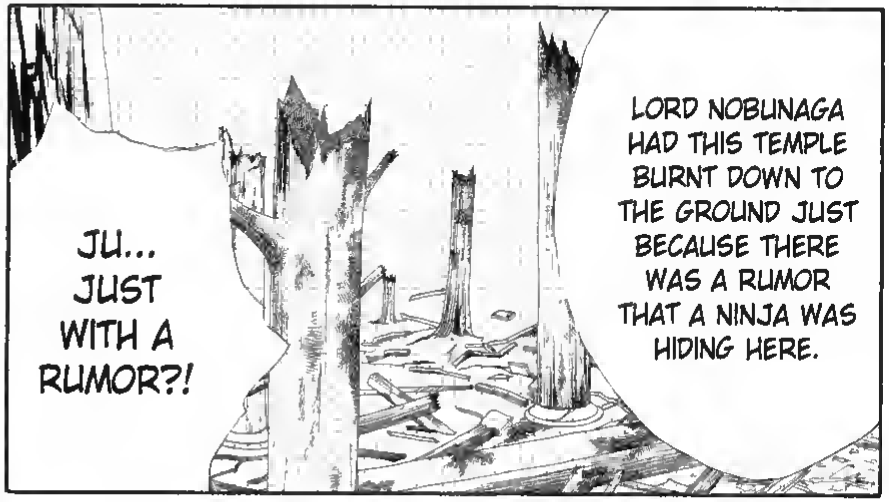
TUP
WOOSH
YOU MUSTN'T DODGE IT.
WHA...
WHAT IS IT?!
EEK
RIKIMARU?!
LONG TIME NO SEE.
IT'S THE REMAINS FROM A FIRE.
SHA
SWISH
FWAK
WHOA!
IT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A TEMPLE.

A NINJA TRIED TO ASSASSINATE LORD NOBUNAGA JUST A LITTLE WHILE AGO...
...SO HIS DISLIKE OF NINJA IS AT ITS PEAK RIGHT NOW.
THAT'S WHY YOU MUST BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL WHEN YOU ENTER AZUCHI.

MASTER HANZO, YOU MUSTN'T REACT EVEN IF YOU FEEL THAT YOU'RE IN DANGER.
YOU CAN'T LET ANYONE KNOW THAT YOU'RE A NINJA...
I'LL BE CAREFUL.

YOU'RE THE PRINCESS'S ATTENDANT...
...RIGHT?
YES...
I'VE BEEN ORDERED BY PRINCESS SARA TO GUIDE YOU TO AZUCHI.

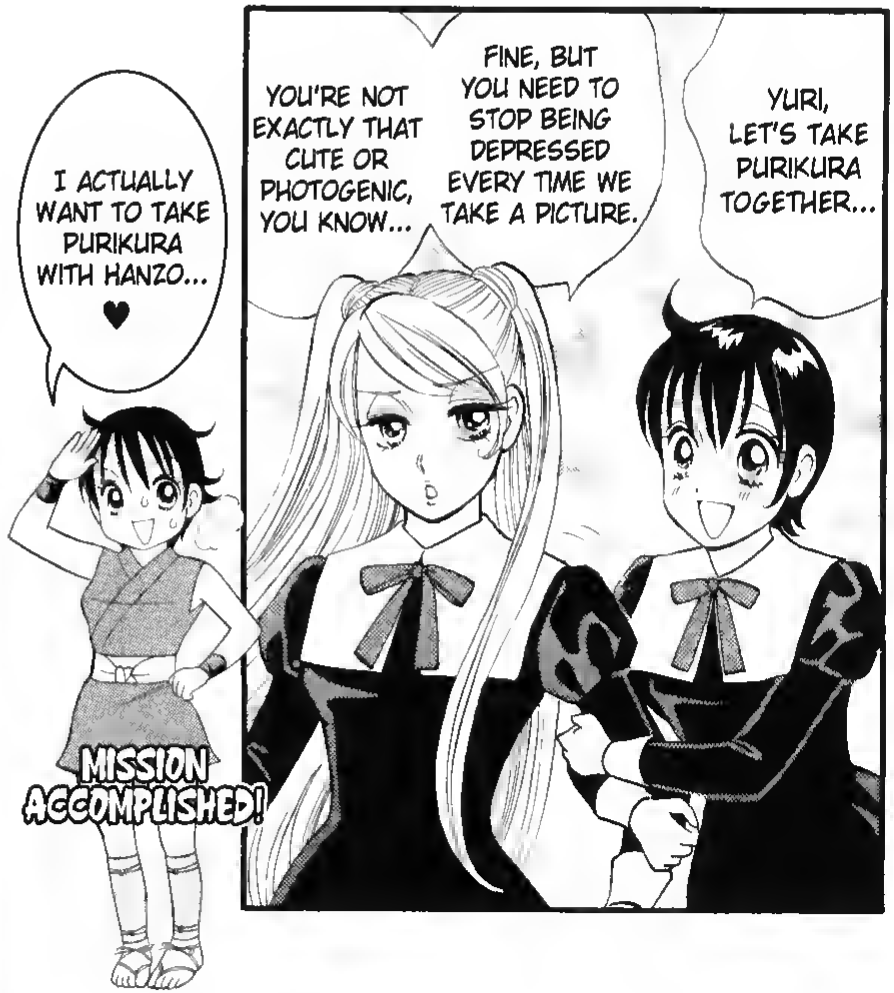
IT IS TO US NINJAS...
IS IT THAT DANGEROUS OF A PLACE?!
AZUCHI...

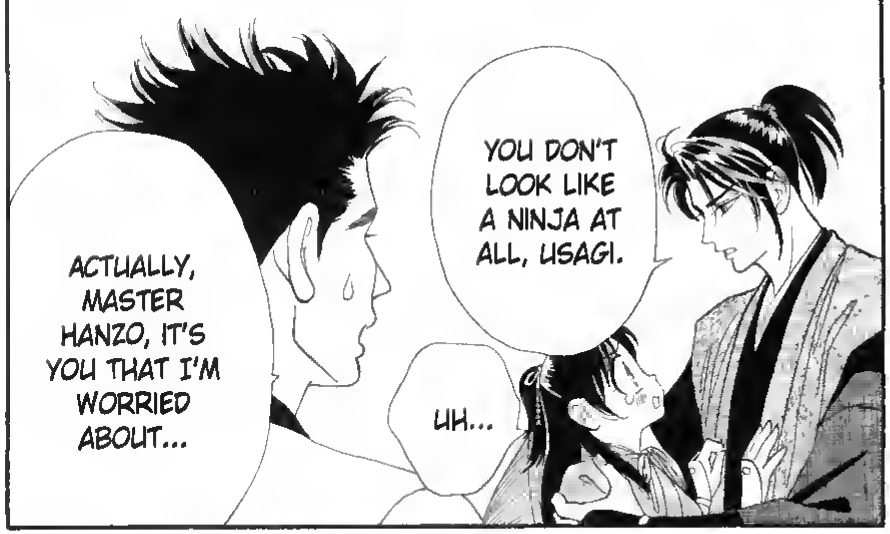

JU... JUST WITH A RUMOR?!
LORD NOBUNAGA HAD THIS TEMPLE BURNT DOWN TO THE GROUND JUST BECAUSE THERE WAS A RUMOR THAT A NINJA WAS HIDING HERE.

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE USAGI AND YURI AS SCHOOL GIRLS."

-MIKAN, WAKAYAMA PREFECTURE




ACTUALLY, MASTER HANZO, IT'S YOU THAT I'M WORRIED ABOUT...
YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE A NINJA AT ALL, USAGI.
UH...

WHAT?!

CRNCH
THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A PEASANT WITH BLOODTHIRSTY-LOOKING EYES, HANZO.

ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT I DON'T LOOK LIKE A PEASANT WHO WORKS ON A TEA PLANTATION?
You're scaring me...
HA... HARDLY...

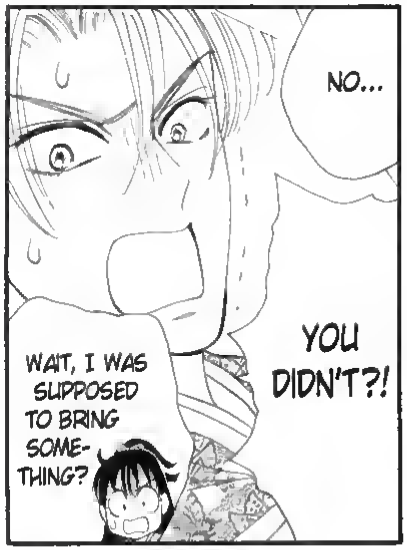
HANZO...

DON'T WORRY.
SQUEEZE

LORD NOBUNAGA'S DISLIKE OF NINJA IS AT ITS PEAK RIGHT NOW.
IF HE FINDS OUT THAT WE'RE NINJA, THEN...

SHK
HANBEI IS A DISTANT RELATIVE OF MINE, AND YOU WORK UNDER ME.
THAT SOUNDS LIKE A MORE FEASIBLE STORY, DOESN'T IT?
SAMURAI?
YOU'RE GOING TO POSE AS A SAMURAI FROM OKAZAKI.

THAT'S THE BEST STORY I COULD THINK OF. IT SOUNDS MORE NATURAL.
HE'S EVEN MORE BLOOD-THIRSTY NOW.
GLARE
WHY DO I HAVE TO BE WORKING UNDER YOU?!


NO...
YOU DIDN'T?!
WAIT, I WAS SUPPOSED TO BRING SOME-THING?

OH, USAGI...
AT THE VERY LEAST, I SHOULD BE YOUR EQUAL!!
DID YOU BRING YOUR TEA TO GIVE TO LORD NOBUNAGA AS A GIFT?
Stop it, please
SHHK
GIFT?

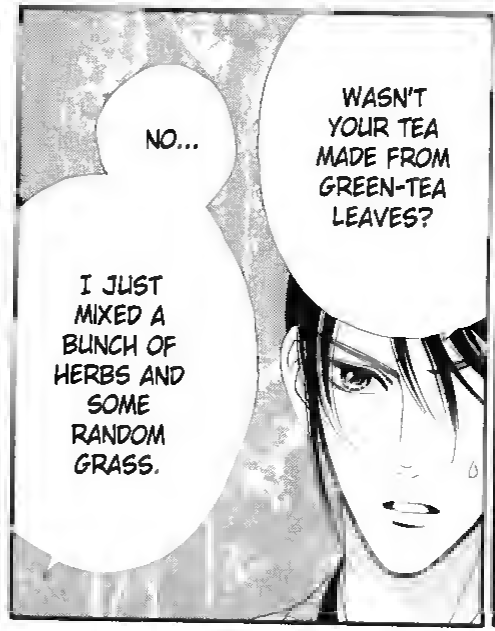
HANZOU?!
I'VE BEEN SO WORRIED ABOUT LEAVING THIS TASK IN YOUR HANDS THAT I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO SLEEP.
HANZOU, YOUR CLOTHES...
ANOTHER NUISANCE.
TMP
TMP
I CAN'T MEET LORD NOBUNAGA IN MY USUAL ATTIRE, NOW CAN I?
HANZO.
HERE.

UE-RIN'S WAY OF THE MANGA ⑨

I had a lot of fun drawing focus lines and shadowing, but I had to practice hard every day to overcome my "I don't like it because I'm not good at it" sentiment

I kept my promise of sending in one manga per month, and I finally received a small award around my third work. Gradually, I began to toddle up the thin "Manga Path" with the help of a supervisor

Back then, the editor in charge of "Manga School" visited Osaka and decided to hold a meeting with several of the people in the Kansai region who had submitted their work. So for the first time, I went to the Big city of Osaka from the great countryside of Nara. Although it was a prefecture right next to mine (well, a city), Osaka felt like a huge metropolis that was far, far away



HUG
SHIVER
A REAL ...?
I'M SO GLAD, HANZO...
I WAS BEING HAPPY FOR YOU!!
HANZOU ...!
AAAAH...
RIGHT.
IF WE DON'T HURRY, THEY'RE GOING TO LEAVE US BEHIND.
A REAL HUSBAND AND WIFE ...
SAY WHAT YOU WANT.
ONCE THIS ASSIGNMENT IS OVER, USAGI AND I WILL BE A REAL HUSBAND AND WIFE.

IF NOBUNAGA WERE TO ATTACK WITH A LARGE ARMY, THEY WOULD REACH US IN SECONDS.
OH, WE'RE ALMOST AT AZUCHI.
I'M GLAD YOU WERE ABLE TO MAKE THE TEA!
THE NEXT DAY
AZUCHI AND IGA ARE VERY CLOSE TO EACH OTHER WITH ONLY KOUGA IN-BETWEEN THEM.
OH... ALREADY?
WOBBLE WOBBLE
IF THAT EVER HAPPENS, THEN IGA WILL...
DON'T WORRY.
HANZO...
THEY'RE IN THEIR OWN WORLD.
LOOK, RIKIMARU.
Ah
THAT IS WHY WE'RE GOING TO AZUCHI, SO THAT IT WILL NEVER HAPPEN.

OOH!!
WHAT IS THAT, A TOY SHOP?!
SHAKE SHAKE
OH
SEE, I KNEW YOU NEEDED ME.
I...I MEAN, HANBEI ...
GLARE
YOU CALLED?
HANZO, LOOK, LOOK!
A DUMPLING SHOP!!

LOOK, THERE'S A SHOP THAT SELLS YOUR FAVORITE ANTIQUES.
IF IT'S GOING TO HELP EASE HER TENSION, WHY NOT LET HER?
WE DIDN'T COME HERE TO PLAY...
CAN I GO AND GET A SOUVENIR FOR MAMEZO?

HANBEI, DID YOU FIND SOMETHING YOU LIKE?
ITS BLACK IRON-LIKE COLOR IS SO BEAUTIFUL!!
YOU HAVE GREAT TASTE SIR!!

CLAMP
I'LL TAKE IT...

THAT'S...
...A SETOGURO TEA BOWL!!

DON'T TREAT ME LIKE I'M HER...

I'M GOING TO HAVE TO DO MY BEST ON THIS ASSIGNMENT!!
SO THIS IS AZUCHI?

DON'T GAPE WITH YOUR MOUTH OPEN.
I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH A LARGE TOWN.
GAWK
GAWK
OH

WE'LL FIGHT IT OUT OVER ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS!!
THUD
STOP IT!
THIS!!
VERY WELL.
GOOD LUCK, HANBEI...
DO WHAT YOU WANT!
ROCK... PAPER... LET'S START!!
...SCISSORS!!
FWOP
SHIK
GOOD!
I WI...
GRIP
WELL, I'M NOT GOING TO LOSE AGAINST A PUP LIKE YOU.
LET ME TELL YOU THAT I HAVE NEVER LOST IN A GAME OF ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS.

NOT A CHANCE.
BUT I GRABBED IT BEFORE YOU DID.
TUG
TUG
BUT MISTER, HE WAS HERE BEFORE YOU, WASN'T HE?
I'M SORRY, BUT I HAD MY EYE ON THIS TEA BOWL BEFORE YOU DID.
HEY...
IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!!
OWW
SHOVE
WHA... WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?!
GRR
GRR
I CANNOT LET THIS TEA BOWL FALL INTO THE HANDS OF A MAN LIKE HIM!!
NO, I WON'T.
JUST GIVE THE TEA BOWL TO THAT OLD MAN.
HOW DARE YOU TREAT MY WIFE LIKE THAT!
YOU...

IT'S CALLED A DOGU. ♡
SKIP

FOR ME...?
DOGU?

USAGI!!
I'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF IT.
WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN YOU AND HANZO?!
SNEAK
I'M SO GLAD...
...THAT YOU LIKE IT. ♡
I LIKE IT A LOT.
HUH?!

YOU'RE DRAWING ATTENTION.
STOP IT.
I WON'T ALLOW THIS...
HOW MUCH IS IT?
UM...

HA HA HA
YOU CHEATER !!
I'M THE WINNER!!
I WIN!
GRRRR
BUT YOU CHEATED!!

I FEEL SO SORRY FOR HANZO...

HANBEI...
HOW UN-PLEASANT...
WHAT A FINE TEA BOWL!!
HA HA HA...

IT'S A PRESENT FROM ME TO YOU, HANBEI. ♡
I WAS TOLD THAT THIS IS OLDER THAN THAT TEA BOWL...
WHAT?!
HUFF
HUFF

I WANT TO PROTECT...
HEY, NEWLY-WEDS...
WHY DON'T YOU DROP BY OUR PLACE?
IS SHE TALKING ABOUT US...?
...THIS HAPPY FEELING...

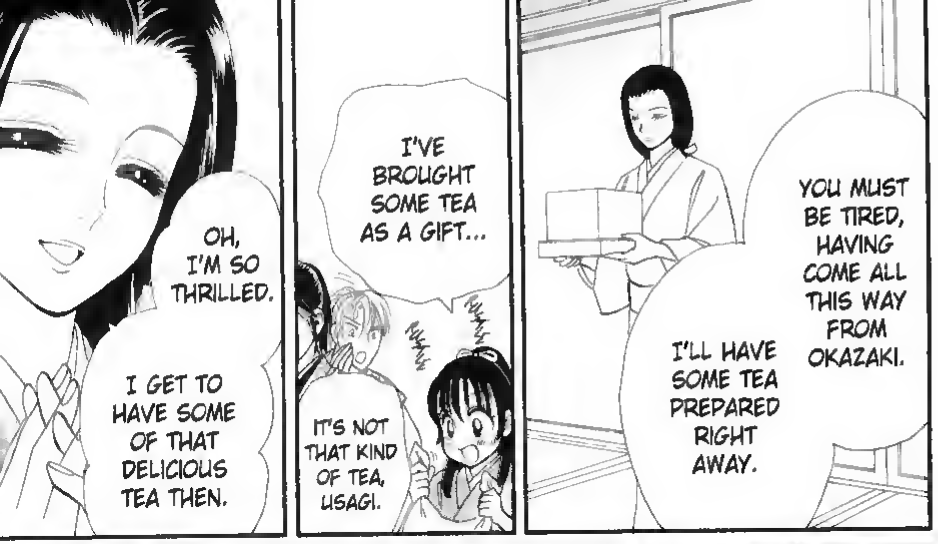
USAGI'S GOT THE FACE OF A WOMAN...
USAGI...
GET AWAY FROM THAT WALKING OBSCENITY AND COME CLOSER TO ME.
Did it happen at last?!
OKAY!
I CAN'T TALK ABOUT...
...SUCH THINGS...
!!
DON'T LEAVE MY SIDE.
OOH...

...GOLDEN WALLS...
...CRIMSON PILLARS...
A LONG FLIGHT OF STONE STEPS THAT SEEM TO REACH UP TO THE SKY...
AND ON TOP OF THAT...
IT'S A CASTLE FIT FOR A GOD TO LIVE IN.

THIS...
...IS AZUCHI CASTLE.

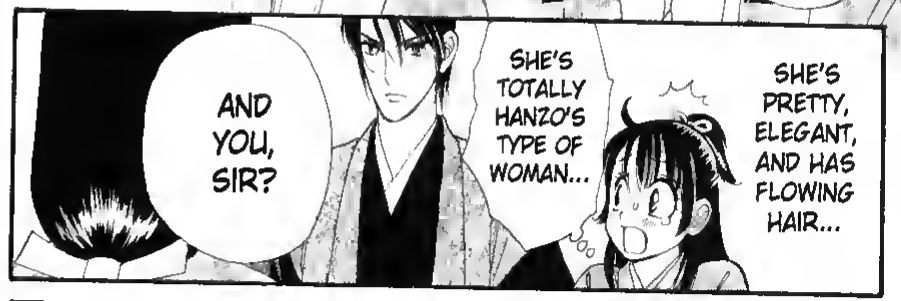
PRINCESS...?
SHE'S SARA'S OLDER SISTER.
LONG TIME NO SEE, HANZOU.
PRINCESS TOKU!
SO YOU'RE THE ONE WHO MADE THAT TEA?
EEEEEEEEK... I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M INSIDE AZUCHI CASTLE...
YE...
...YES!!
U... USAGI!!
AND WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

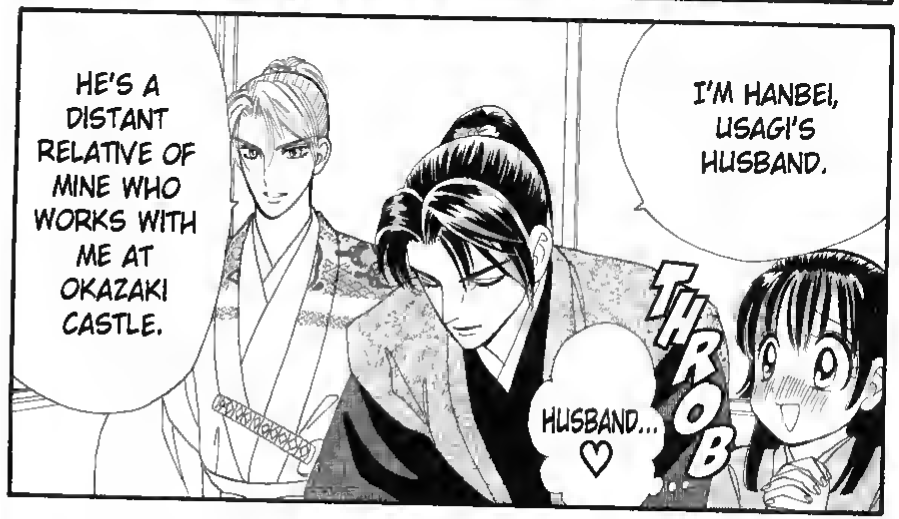
USAGI!
WE'RE GOING TO FIND AN INN.
OH!
I...INN?!
LORD NOBUNAGA'S OUT FOR TWO TO THREE DAYS, SO WE HAVE TO COME BACK LATER.
THANK GOD...
PHEW
HANZOU...
TWITCH
...WE'D NEVER BE ABLE TO WIN.
...SAGI...
IF WE GO TO WAR WITH NOBUNAGA, A MAN WHO HAS THE POWER TO BUILD SUCH AN AMAZING CASTLE...


OH, I'M SO THRILLED.
I GET TO HAVE SOME OF THAT DELICIOUS TEA THEN.
I'VE BROUGHT SOME TEA AS A GIFT...
IT'S NOT THAT KIND OF TEA, USAGI.
YOU MUST BE TIRED, HAVING COME ALL THIS WAY FROM OKAZAKI.
I'LL HAVE SOME TEA PREPARED RIGHT AWAY.

THE TEA MASTER'S HERE TODAY, SO I'LL HAVE HIM MAKE US SOME TEA.
HUH?
THAT TEA BOWL...
SHHK

USAGI?
WHAT A CUTE NAME.
SHE'S GOT SUCH A CLEAR, BEAUTIFUL VOICE...


AND YOU, SIR?
SHE'S TOTALLY HANZO'S TYPE OF WOMAN...
SHE'S PRETTY, ELEGANT, AND HAS FLOWING HAIR...


HE'S A DISTANT RELATIVE OF MINE WHO WORKS WITH ME AT OKAZAKI CASTLE.
I'M HANBEI, USAGI'S HUSBAND.
HUSBAND... ♡
THROB

I'M SORRY, BUT I CANNOT DO THAT.
HUMPH
CAN YOU MAKE SOME TEA FOR THESE GUESTS FROM OKAZAKI?
RIKYU...
THIS CHEATING OLD MAN IS A TEA MASTER?!
THAT MAN IS NOT A SAMURAI FROM OKAZAKI.
PRINCESS TOKU...
RIKYU...?!

I'M...
HUH!
HOW DO YOU DO.
SO YOU'RE THE GUESTS I WAS TOLD ABOUT.
IT'S THAT OLD CHEATER WE JUST MET!!
YOU...!!
I'M SEN NO RIKYU...LORD NOBUNAGA'S TEA MASTER.
THIS OLD MAN...
DO YOU KNOW EACH OTHER?
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR LETTING ME HAVE THE SETOGURO TEA BOWL.

Tail of the Moon

Chapter 48

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE HANZO AND HANZOU BABYSITTING!"

-SAORI ASAI, AICHI PREFECTURE

HAS HE DISCOVERED THAT WE'RE NINJA?!
WHY DO YOU SAY THAT?
I WOULD HAVE NOTICED SUCH A RUDE SAMURAI AROUND WHEN I DROPPED BY OKAZAKI THIS SUMMER.
ACTUALLY, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE.

HANBEI GOT THIS JOB ONLY A WHILE AGO.
NICE TO MEET YOU...
HMM?!

I SEE. IS THAT SO?
THIS MAN'S SHARPER THAN I THOUGHT...
THIS OLD MAN HAD ME WORRIED FOR A SECOND...

SHAKE
SHAKE
SHUP
SHUP
SHAKE THE POT AROUND...
...AND POUR...
I POUR IN THE TEA LEAVES...
GUSH
GUSH

I'LL MAKE THE TEA!!

SUP
HUMPH
IF YOU INSIST, PRINCESS TOKU...
THEN WILL YOU MAKE US SOME TEA?

THAT MAN IS NOT A SAMURAI FROM OKAZAKI.

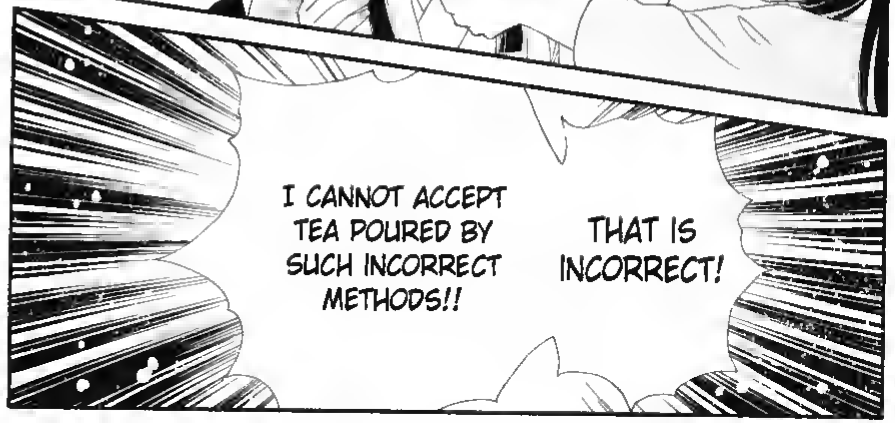
BUT IF YOU REJECT THIS TEA...
...WOULDN'T IT BE THE SAME AS MOCKING LORD NOBUNAGA SINCE HE LIKES IT?
THAT'S RIGHT, RIKYU.
YOU MUSTN'T REJECT THE TEA BEFORE EVEN TRYING IT...
PLEASE TRY IT, RIKYU.

SEE, HE DOESN'T LIKE IT...

SIP

IF YOU SAY SO, PRINCESS TOKU...
IT'S FINE!
GRR
GRR
I DIDN'T MAKE IT FOR THAT OLD MAN TO DRINK...

TH...
TH... THANK YOU.
It looks hot.
HERE YOU ARE, PRINCESS TOKU. ♪
PHEW


I CANNOT ACCEPT TEA POURED BY SUCH INCORRECT METHODS!!
THAT IS INCORRECT!

HAN-BEI...
MY WIFE IS AN AMATEUR AT BREWING TEA...
...SO IT MUST SEEM COMPLETELY INCORRECT TO A SKILLED TEA CEREMONY MASTER LIKE YOURSELF, RIKYU.

I DON'T NEED YOU TO ACCEPT IT...
SHUDDER
SHUDDER
YOU'RE RIGHT.

I DON'T LIKE THAT OLD MAN...
TOSS
I DON'T CARE IF HE'S SOME FAMOUS TEA MASTER OR NOT...
TOSS
THAT RIKYU IS PRETTY SHARP.
FOLD
YEAH, HE IS.

I HEAR THAT PEOPLE TALK ABOUT POLITICS AT TEA CEREMONIES.
I BET RIKYU WOULD KNOW ABOUT THE ATTACK ON IGA.

HANBE! WAS TELLING ME HOW HE WAS GOING TO PLAY WITH YOU TONIGHT. ♪
WHAAAAT
I SAID NOTHING OF THE SORT!!
WELL THEN, HAVE FUUUUN... ♡

WHAT ARE YOU TWO TALKING ABOUT?
HMM?
SQUISH

LET'S JUST GO TO SLEEP, USAGI!!
TH-THUMP
CAN IT BE...
...THAT HE'S THINKING OF CONTINUING WHAT WE WERE DOING THE OTHER NIGHT...?!
TH-THUMP

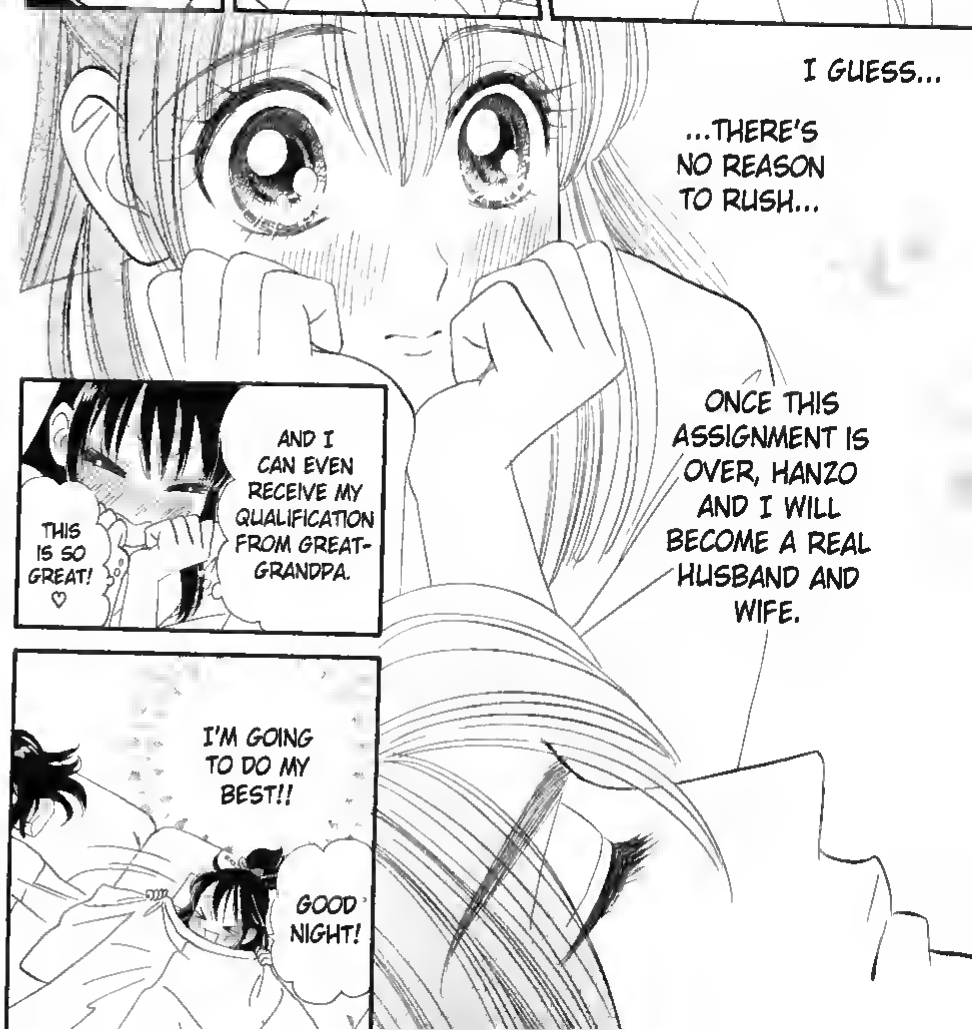
HUH?
IT IS AN INCREDIBLY SMOOTH TEA WITH A WONDERFUL ROASTED FLAVOR TO IT!!
DELICIOUS...

MY WIFE HAS HAD A DEEP INTEREST IN HERBS EVER SINCE CHILDHOOD.
MMRPH
I WAS TRYING TO MAKE A TEA TO LOSE WEIGHT BUT FAILED...
I MADE IT MY-SELF...
WHO DID YOU LEARN THIS TEA RECIPE FROM?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
HE CHANGED HIS ATTITUDE SO QUICKLY...
HA HA HA
YOUR WIFE MUST BE A GENIUS TO HAVE MADE SUCH A WONDERFUL TEA FROM MERE SELF-STUDY!!

UE-RIN'S WAY OF THE MANGA ⑩

My best memory of meeting the editor for the first time was how I was able to take a look at a real draft of an author who had a series in the magazine back then. It was so beautiful!! "Do you have to be so detailed with the backgrounds?!" "I love these effects!!" "How can you draw the reflection of light in the eyes and hair so beautifully?!" It really was an eye-opener for me!! My confidence and pride just got flushed away and I felt really embarrassed of myself. The images I saw in the magazine and the real thing were totally different. It was ten times as beautiful... no, even more beautiful than that!!



TUP
THIS CASTLE IS ENORMOUS.
I'LL NEVER FINISH LOOKING AROUND IN ONLY ONE NIGHT.

ZZZ
CINCH
I MUST FINISH THIS ASSIGNMENT QUICKLY AND RETURN TO IGA FOR USAGI'S SAKE AS WELL...
MMPH...
KICK
HM?
OH USAGI...
TUCK

I...I JUST GOT LOST...
I...I'M NOT A SUSPICIOUS PERSON OR ANYTHING...
YOU MUST BE THE ONE WHO BROUGHT THE TEA.
TH-THUMP
YEARGH
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
LET ME GUIDE YOU TO YOUR ROOM THEN.
TH... THAT'S RIGHT...
WHIFF
OH!
BE CARE-FUL.
THERE'S A SMALL STEP AHEAD.
TH... THANKS.
HE DOESN'T HAVE TO HOLD MY HAND...
OH...

...
HANBEI...?
NGH
KICK
MMPH...
TMP
TMP
HANBEI?
HE'S NOT IN THE BATH-ROOM...
SHHK
TMP
TMP
TMP
THAT MUST BE IT.
MAYBE WE MISSED EACH OTHER, AND HE'S ALREADY BACK IN THE ROOM...
I HOPE HANZO WASN'T CAPTURED BECAUSE THEY FOUND OUT HE'S A NINJA...
OH DEAR
OH DEAR
WHERE'S MY ROOM AGAIN?
HUH?

HUG
BUT HANBEI, YOU...
DO YOU ANY IDEA HOW WORRIED I WAS?!

NAG NAG NAG NAG
I DON'T UNDER-STAND SINCE HE'S SCOLDING ME BY JUST MOVING HIS LIPS...
WHERE DO YOU THINK WE ARE?! IF THEY FIND OUT THAT WE ARE NINJA...

SIT DOWN.

HANZO...
USAGI...

HE'S A MAN...
...BUT HE SMELLS SO NICE...
USAGI!!
I GUESS THERE ARE KIND PEOPLE EVEN AMONG NOBUNAGA'S MEN...

HUH?
BUT THAT MAN OVER THERE HELPED ME...
I...I WENT TO THE BATHROOM AND COULDN'T FIND MY WAY BACK.

I DIDN'T EVEN THANK HIM YET...
DON'T GO OUT BY YOURSELF!!
ZWAK

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?!
HANZ...
HANBEI...

PANT
PANT
HURRY UP!!
BUT I'M NOT READY YET...
HUH?
TH... THESE STONE STEPS ARE SO TOUGH...
HUFF
HUFF
AHHHH
WHAT'S WRONG?!
TH...THIS STONE...
...HAS BUDDHA ENGRAVED ON IT...!!
AAAAAAH

I'M STILL SLEEEEEPY.
USAGI... WAKE UP!!
WAKE UP AND GET CHANGED!!
SMACK
OW!
GREAT VIEW... ♪
WE'RE GOING TO SEE HIM NOW.
SNAP
LORD NOBUNAGA CAME BACK JUST A MOMENT AGO!!
IF WE'RE LATE, WHO KNOWS WHAT'LL HAPPEN TO US? ♪
JOOM
RI... RIGHT NOW?!

HANZO'S WITH ME.
THERE'S NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF.
OKAY.

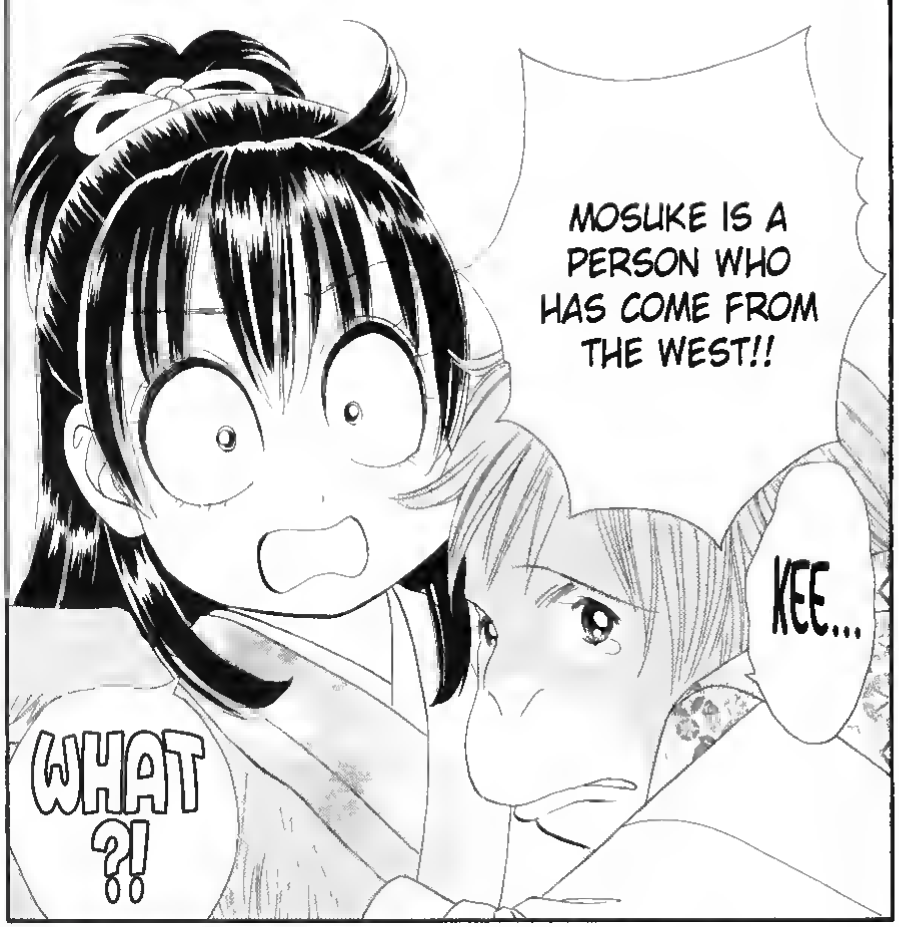
HE'S RIGHT NEXT TO ME...
WHAT'S THAT?
PLEASE COME DOWN, MOSUKE.
SHH
MOSUKE...!

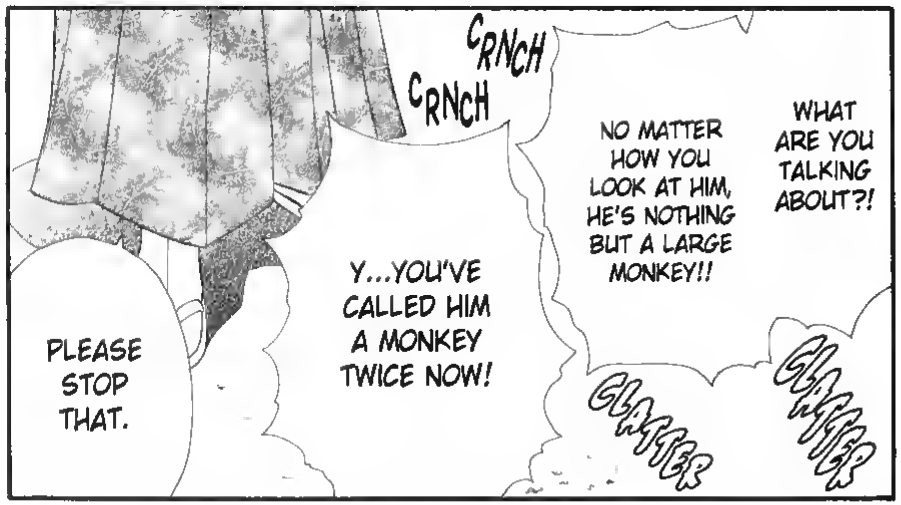
COME TO THINK OF IT, NOBUNAGA BURNED ENRYAKUJI TO THE GROUND, DIDN'T HE...

BU... BUT...
...YOU'LL RECEIVE DIVINE PUNISHMENT IF YOU DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS...
JUST BE CAREFUL NOT TO STEP ON IT.

WHAT'S IT DOING HERE?!
IT'S BEEN PLACED THERE TO STOP ENEMY SOLDIERS.

THIS IS TOO SCARY...
I'M HERE FOR YOU.


MOSUKE IS A PERSON WHO HAS COME FROM THE WEST!!
KEE...
WHAT ?!

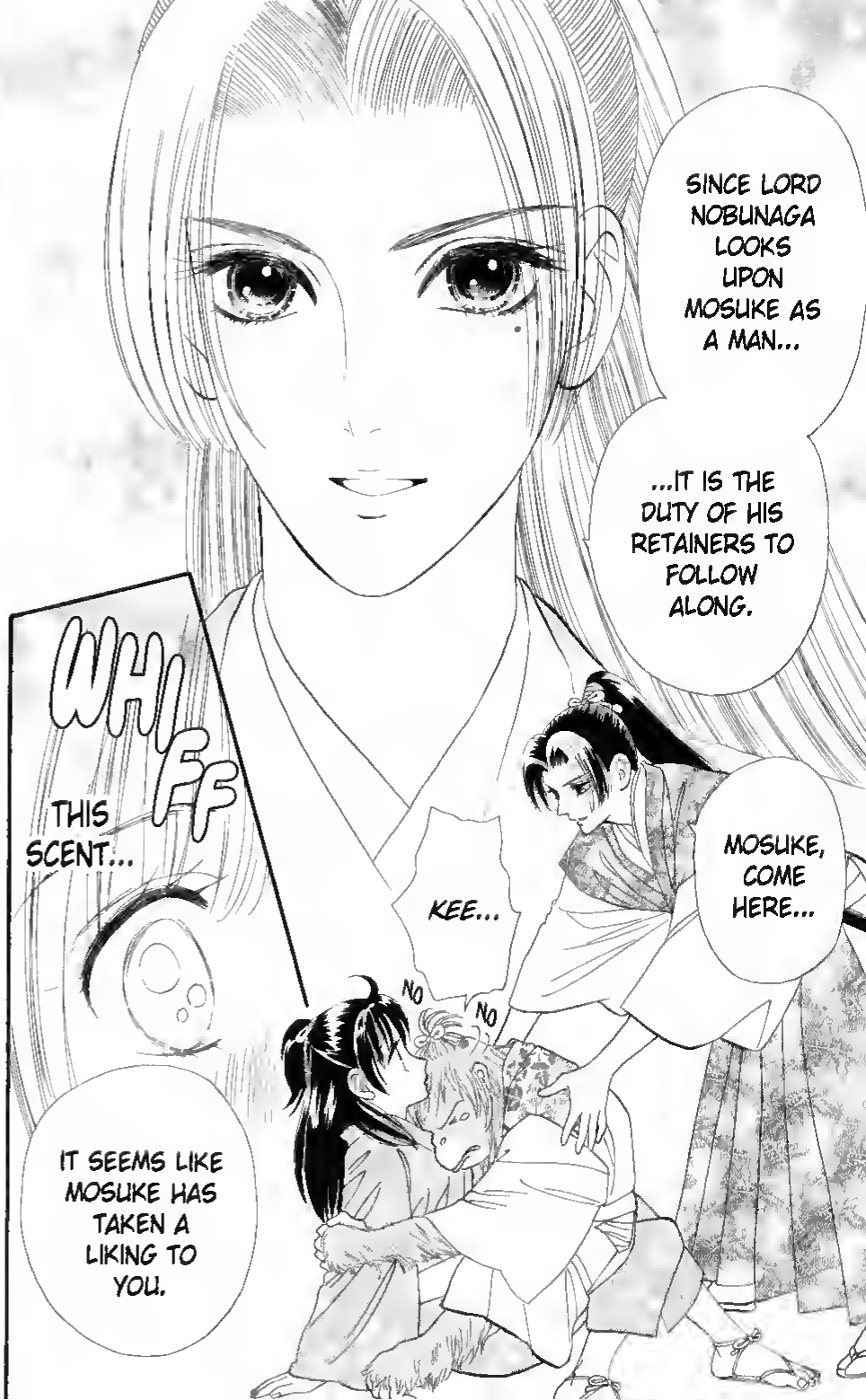

CRNCH
CRNCH
NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT HIM, HE'S NOTHING BUT A LARGE MONKEY!!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
Y...YOU'VE CALLED HIM A MONKEY TWICE NOW!
PLEASE STOP THAT.
GLITTER
GLITTER

MOSUKE...
PLEASE RETURN TO THE CASTLE...
CRASH
EEEEEK
WAAA
OW!

A...
KEE...
A MONKEY ?!

BUT HE'S A LARGE MONKEY, ISN'T HE?
HUH?!
YOU...
HOW DARE YOU CALL MOSUKE A MONKEY?!

I'M MORI RANMARU...
...LORD NOBUNAGA'S PAGE.
YOU KNOW HIM, USAGI?
THE MAN FROM LAST NIGHT!!
NO.
IT'S NOT THAT I KNOW HIM, BUT...
I DIDN'T KNOW THAT HE WAS SO BEAUTIFUL...
I COULDN'T TELL LAST NIGHT BECAUSE IT WAS SO DARK.
I'VE GOT THIS FEELING THAT I'VE MET HIM SOMEWHERE BEFORE...
HMM...
BUT I'D NEVER FORGET SOMEBODY AS BEAUTIFUL AS HIM...
YOU'RE THE FIRST PERSON I KNOW WHO'S CALLED MOSUKE A MONKEY RIGHT TO HIS FACE.


SINCE LORD NOBUNAGA LOOKS UPON MOSUKE AS A MAN...
...IT IS THE DUTY OF HIS RETAINERS TO FOLLOW ALONG.
WHIFF
THIS SCENT...
KEE...
MOSUKE, COME HERE...
NO
NO
IT SEEMS LIKE MOSUKE HAS TAKEN A LIKING TO YOU.

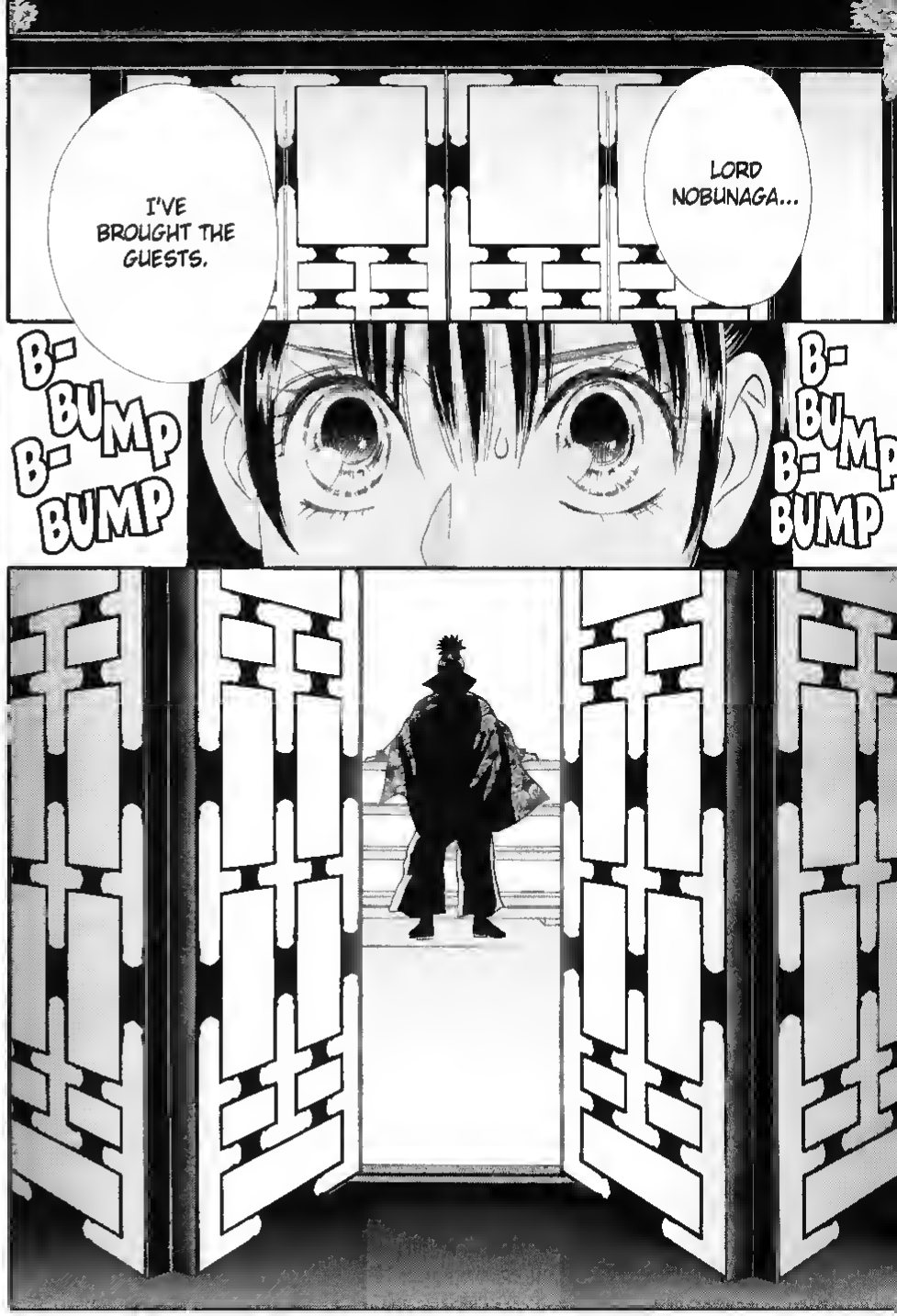
B-BUMP
B-BUMP
PLEASE COME IN.
LORD NOBUNAGA IS WAITING FOR YOU.
...I'M GOING TO MEET ODA NOBUNAGA ...!!
SO AT LONG LAST...

HUMPH
BUT IF YOU WANT TO LIVE LONGER, I ADVISE YOU TO TREAT MOSUKE AS A HUMAN BEING.
EEEEEK
O... OKAY!
OH!
I'M SORRY...
NOT AT ALL.
I LIKE PEOPLE WHO ARE HONEST.

Tail of the Moon

Chapter 49

...ODA NOBUNAGA !!
...SEE.
I...
SO THIS IS...
!!
GASP
HE'S OVER-WHELMING.
IT FEELS LIKE HE'LL KILL ME IF OUR EYES EVEN MEET...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
HE'S OVER-WHELMING, AND SCARY.


I'VE BROUGHT THE GUESTS.
LORD NOBUNAGA...
B- B- BUMP BUMP
B- B- BUMP BUMP

STOP IT!
USAGI...
GRAB
IF YOU DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT TO LORD NOBUNAGA, HE'LL KILL YOU.
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
HANZOU, THAT'S...
DON'T!

USAGI...
THIS MAN IS LORD NOBUNAGA'S BODY DOUBLE.
TREMBLE
TREMBLE

LORD NOBUNAGA DOES NOT GREET HIS GUESTS WITH HIS BACK TO THEM.
AAAH...
I'M SORRY...

I...I'M SORRY.

BUT LAST TIME, I SAW HIM GREET HIS GUEST THIS WAY...
KNEEL
THAT'S BECAUSE IT WAS A CLOUDY DAY!!
?!

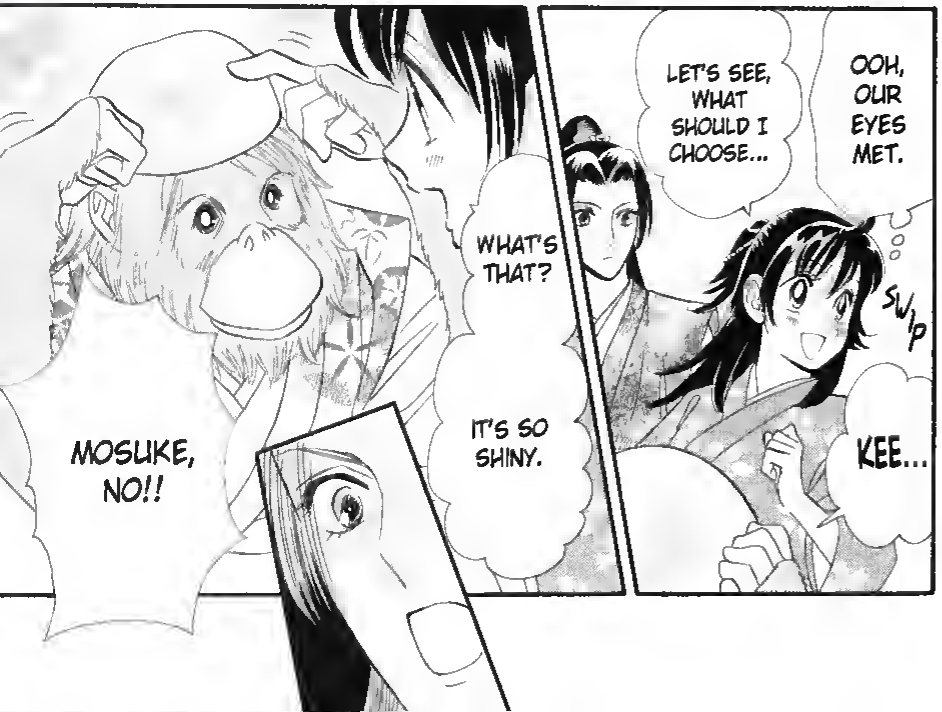
TROMP
TROMP
BEFORE YOU GO, I'VE BEEN ORDERED TO GIVE YOU A GIFT.
GIFT?!
I'M SO GLAD... NOW I CAN GO BACK TO IGA ALIVE.
TH...THEN THE REAL LORD NOBUNAGA...?
UNFORTUNATELY, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO MEET HIM.
SO I CAN GO HOME NOW?!
WILL THE OTHERS PLEASE WAIT HERE?
BUT...
DON'T WORRY.
I'M NOT GOING TO EAT YOUR WIFE OR ANYTHING.
HUMPH...
HANBEI...
YOU'VE GOT REALLY DEEP SCOWL LINES BETWEEN YOUR EYES...
You're scaring me...

BODY...
...DOUBLE?
LORD NOBUNAGA IS CURRENTLY BUSY WITH A WAR COUNCIL, SO WE DECIDED TO USE A BODY DOUBLE...
A WAR COUNCIL?!
IT COULD BE ABOUT AN ATTACK ON IGA...
...BUT I AM DREADFULLY SORRY TO HAVE GOTTEN SUCH AN UNSKILLED BODY DOUBLE. EVEN HANBEI SAW THROUGH HIM.
HE'S PRETTY SHARP...
HANBEI, YOU COULD TELL?

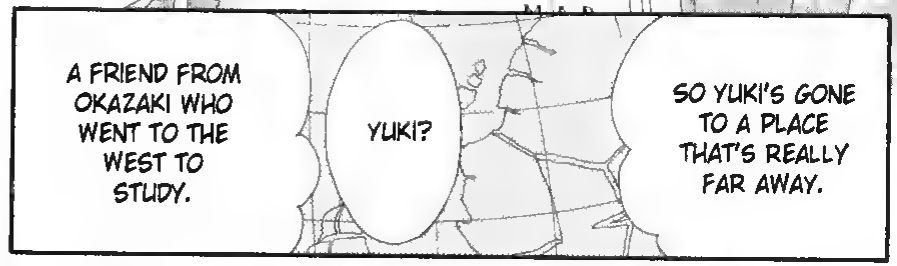
THIS IS A GLOBE. IT'S A THREE-DIMENSIONAL MAP OF THE STAR WE LIVE ON.
WHAT'S THIS ROUND THING?
They're all so glitzy
IT'S REALLY NICE TO BE ABLE TO CHOOSE ANY ONE OF THEM, BUT I CAN'T TELL WHAT THEY ARE...
I'VE BEEN TOLD THAT THIS WORLD IS A ROUND STAR LIKE THE MOON AND THE SUN.
WE...
...WE LIVE ON A STAR?!
YOU AND LORD NOBUNAGA ARE THE ONLY PEOPLE I KNOW WHO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACCEPT THIS WORLD AS BEING ROUND SO QUICKLY!!
OH... REALLY?
WONDER-FUL...!!
HUH?
Wow it rotates too
OOOH, I NEVER KNEW THAT.

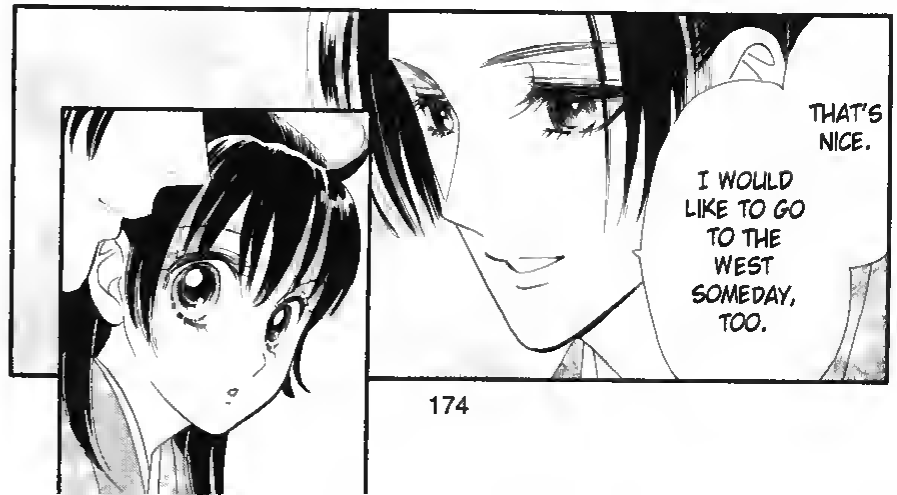
TMP
TMP
USAGI... PLEASE FOLLOW ME...
THESE ARE LORD NOBUNAGA'S TREASURES.
PLEASE CHOOSE ANY ITEM YOU WOULD LIKE TO KEEP AS A GIFT.
IT'S DAZZLING...
WOW...

I'M SURE I'VE SEEN IT SOMEWHERE BEFORE...
THIS PROFILE...


MOSUKE, NO!!
WHAT'S THAT?
IT'S SO SHINY.
LET'S SEE, WHAT SHOULD I CHOOSE...
OOH, OUR EYES MET.
SWIP
KEE...

SO ON THIS MAP, WHERE ARE THE CITIES?
THE CITIES ARE TOO SMALL TO BE WRITTEN HERE...
...BUT THIS IS JAPAN, WHERE WE LIVE.
AND IF WE ROTATE THIS GLOBE HALF WAY, WE GET TO THE WEST, WHERE THIS GLOBE IS FROM.


A FRIEND FROM OKAZAKI WHO WENT TO THE WEST TO STUDY.
YUKI?
SO YUKI'S GONE TO A PLACE THAT'S REALLY FAR AWAY.


THAT'S NICE.
I WOULD LIKE TO GO TO THE WEST SOMEDAY, TOO.

UE-RIN'S WAY OF THE MANGA (11)

During the meeting, I brought along two 30-page manga pieces that I created during my summer vacation to prove to the editor that "this middle schooler's really trying hard." I had the editor look through my work and give me advice about it, but in the end, I was so nervous that I didn't remember anything I was told. Argh. I should have taken notes. I'm really sorry that my sentences are hard to read since I'm writing them down as I remember them off the top of my head. And since this is the last column in this volume, I'll write the rest in the next volume!

Send your messages and letters to the address below. We're looking forward to your requests for the Extra Missions as well!

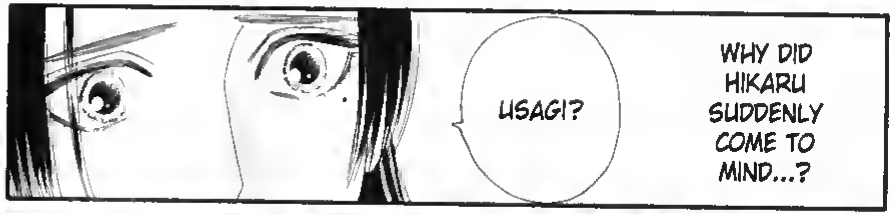
Rinko Ueda
C/O Shojo Beat
Viz Media
PO Box 77010
San Francisco, CA
94107

Rinko Ueda

"THAT PERSON WAS SO GOOD-LOOKING..."
THIS GUY...
HE'S THE ONE I SAW AT KOUGA...!!

SPARKLE
SPARKLE
I'M REALLY SORRY TO HAVE TALKED ABOUT THE SKULL...

"HELLO, MY ANGEL."
DAZZLING...


USAGI?
WHY DID HIKARU SUDDENLY COME TO MIND...?

!!

IF HE DID REMEMBER, I GUESS HE WOULD HAVE CAUGHT ME BY NOW...
HE DOESN'T REMEMBER ...?
THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT...
KEE...
AND I'M WEARING A DISGUISE, TOO...
I'M...
...FINE...
!!
TUG
...SO HE WON'T NOTICE.

I HAVE TO ESCAPE.
EEEEEK
QUIVER
YOUR FACE IS REALLY PALE.
SLIP
FONK
OW!
IF HE REMEMBERS ME...
CALM DOWN, USAGI.
OWWW...
...THEN HE KNOWS THAT I'M A NINJA!!

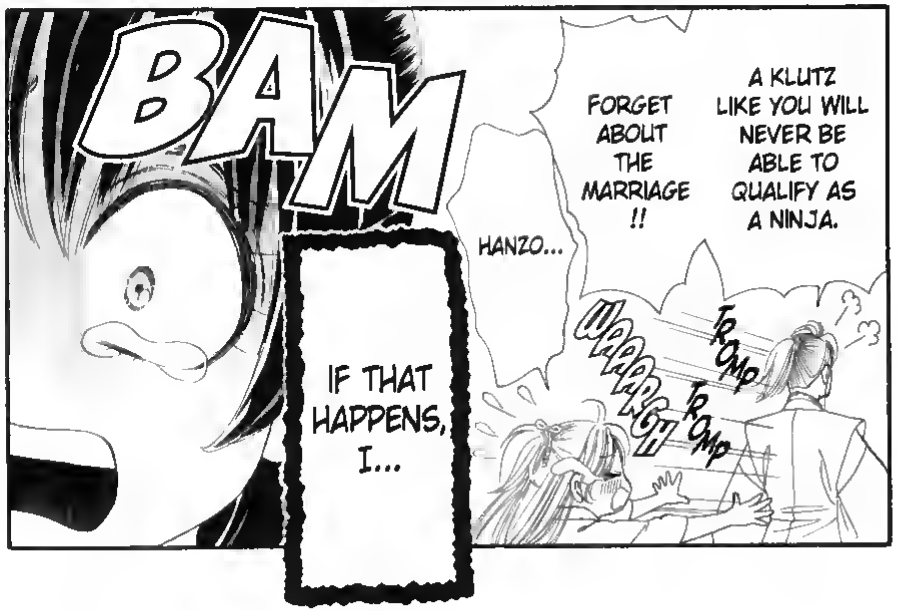
...
USAGI...
HE'S NOTICED FOR SURE...
KEE?
OH, NO!
YANK
GIVE IT BACK!
DON'T TELL ANYBODY ABOUT THE WIG!!
PLEASE!!
IT'S ALL OR NOTHING NOW...
PLEASE...
BUT HANBEI LIKES LONG HAIR, SO...
I TRIED TO CUT MY OWN HAIR AND FAILED...
THIS IS, WELL...

HMM?
USAGI, YOUR HAIR...
KEE?
SHHF

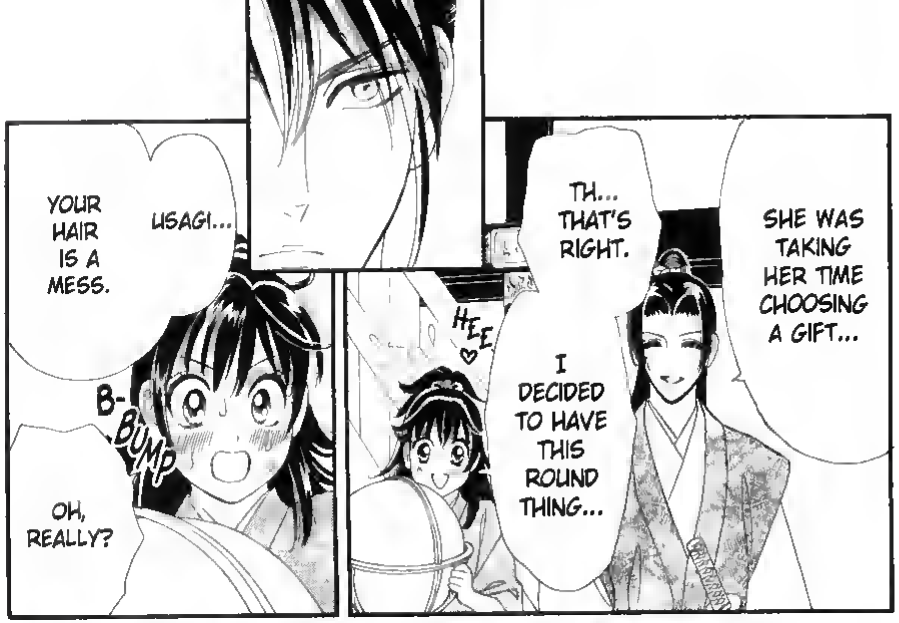
KEE!
MY WIG...!!

I HAVE TO TELL HANZO THAT I SAW HIM AT KOUGA.

WHY DIDN'T YOU NOTICE SUCH AN IMPORTANT THING EARLIER?!
YOU IDIOT!!
BUT IF I TELL HIM...

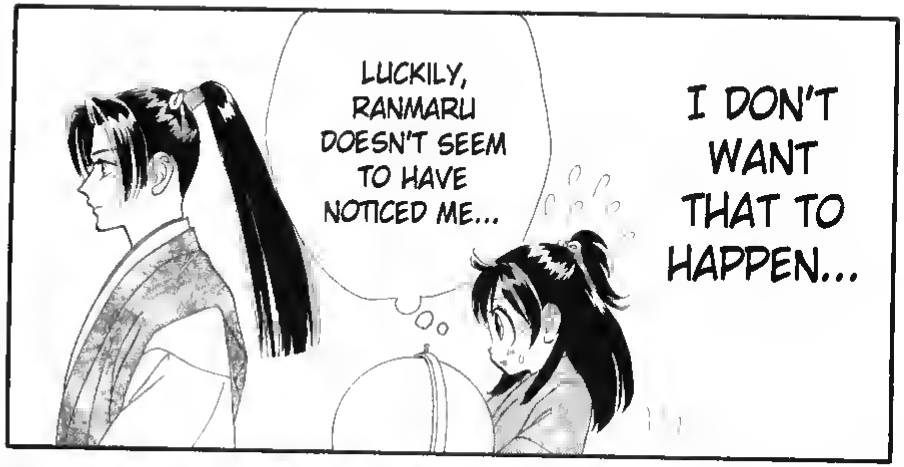

BAM
IF THAT HAPPENS, I...
HANZO...
FORGET ABOUT THE MARRIAGE !!
A KLUTZ LIKE YOU WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO QUALIFY AS A NINJA.
WAAAAAGH!!
TOMP
TOMP

WE SHOULD RETURN SOON, OR YOUR FRIENDS ARE GOING TO BE WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
HAVE YOU DECIDED ON A GIFT?
I JUST WANT TO GO BACK TO IGA...
OH, I REALLY DON'T WANT ANYTHING.
WHY NOT TAKE THIS GLOBE BACK WITH YOU?
YOU'RE BEING TOO MODEST.
TH... THANK YOU...
VERY WELL.
THIS WILL BE A SECRET BETWEEN THE TWO OF US.
HE BELIEVED IT?!


USAGI...
YOUR HAIR IS A MESS.
B-BUMP
OH, REALLY?
TH... THAT'S RIGHT.
I DECIDED TO HAVE THIS ROUND THING...
HEE
SHE WAS TAKING HER TIME CHOOSING A GIFT...

CHUCKLE CHUCKLE
UH... UH-HUH...
WERE YOU REALLY JUST TAKING YOUR TIME CHOOSING A GIFT?!

I CAN'T TELL YOU.
IT'S A SECRET BETWEEN ME AND USAGI.
WHAT'S SO FUNNY?


LUCKILY, RANMARU DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE NOTICED ME...
I DON'T WANT THAT TO HAPPEN...

SO I'LL JUST KEEP QUIET...

WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?!
TMP
TMP

TO BE CONTINUED...

Page 127, panel 1: **Dogu**
Dogu are clay figurines that were made during the Jomon period of ancient Japan. Their purpose still remains unclear, but they were most likely used as effigies to which people could transfer illnesses and then destroy, cleaning that person of that illness or misfortune.

Page 136, panel 4: **Sen no Rikyu**
Sen no Rikyu (1522-1591) is famous for having a huge influence on the Japanese tea ceremony, particularly in wabi-cha (a style that emphasizes simplicity). Rikyu became tea master for Oda Nobunaga when he was 58 years old.

Page 156, panel 3: **Enryakuji**
Enryakuji is a famous temple on Mt. Hiei and was a pretty significant symbol of Buddhism at the time. Because the Buddhists did not obey Nobunaga, he burned the temple to the ground in 1571, killing 20 to 30 thousand men, women, and children in the process.

Page 161, panel 2: **Ranmaru Mori**
Ranmaru Mori is one of Nobunaga's most famous vassals. He became Oda Nobunaga's attendant at a young age and was recognized for his talent and loyalty.

Page 176, panel 3: **Asai Nagamasa**
Asai Nagamasa (1545-1573) was the lord of Omi and also Oda Nobunaga's brother-in-law. He chose to join the Asakura family and the monks of Mt. Hiei against Nobunaga and was killed as a result.

Page 188, panel 2: **Tokugawa Ieyasu**
Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616) was the first Shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate. He made a small fishing village named Edo the center of his activities. Edo thrived and became a huge town, and was later renamed Tokyo, the present capital.

Page 59: **Kanto vs. Kansai**
The Kanto region is to the east of Honshu and is made up of seven prefectures: Gunma, Tochigi, Ibaraki, Saitama, Tokyo, Chiba, and Kanagawa. The Kansai region is to the west of Honshu and is made up of Nara, Wakayama, Mie, Kyoto, Osaka, Hyogo, and Shiga. The cultures of the two regions are often compared because of the differences in food, manners, accents, etc.

Page 71, panel 1: **Uji**
Uji is an area in Japan famous for its green tea.

Page 72, panel 7: **Jizo**
Jizo are considered the guardian deities of children. However, Jizo statues are also placed alongside travel paths throughout Japan, acting as guardians to those who travel on such paths.

Page 86: **Kunoichi**
A term often used for female ninja. The word is spelled く ノ 一, and when combined, the letters form the kanji for woman, 女。

Page 112: **Purikura**
Purikura are photo stickers taken inside photo booth machines found in arcades and other places in Japan. Once the picture is taken, the subjects can customize and decorate the photo using a pen-sensitive touch-screen.

Page 117, panel 1: **Okazaki**
Okazaki is in Aichi prefecture on the main island of Honshu, about 22 miles from Nagoya.

The ways of the ninja are mysterious indeed, so here is a glossary of terms to help you navigate the intricacies of their world.

Page 32: **Bae Yong Joon**
Bae Yong Joon is the leading actor in *Winter Sonata*.

Page 35, panel 2: **Nanmaida**
Nanmaida is the shortened form of *Namu-amidobutsu*, which means "Hail Amida-buddha." It's a prayer from Pure Land Buddhism, and it's probably one of the most famous Buddhist prayers in Japan.

Page 49, panel 8: **Princess**
Sara is not a princess in the European sense of the word. The Japanese word *hime* means a young woman of noble birth.

Page 49, panel 8: **Oda Nobunaga**
Nobunaga lived from 1534 to 1582, and came close to unifying Japan. He is probably one of the most famous Japanese warlords. He was the first warlord to successfully incorporate the gun in battle, and is notorious for his ruthlessness. He completely razed Mt. Hiei, a major Japanese Buddhist site of the time, and spared no lives in the battle.

Page 50, panel 1: **Azuchi**
Azuchi is on Lake Biwa in Shiga Prefecture, where Nobunaga built his castle and the town that were the center of his operations.

Page 58: **108 Earthly Desires**
Buddhists believe that humans have 108 earthly desires (though the number actually differs from sect to sect). That's why monks toll the bell 108 times on New Year's Eve to get rid of those desires.

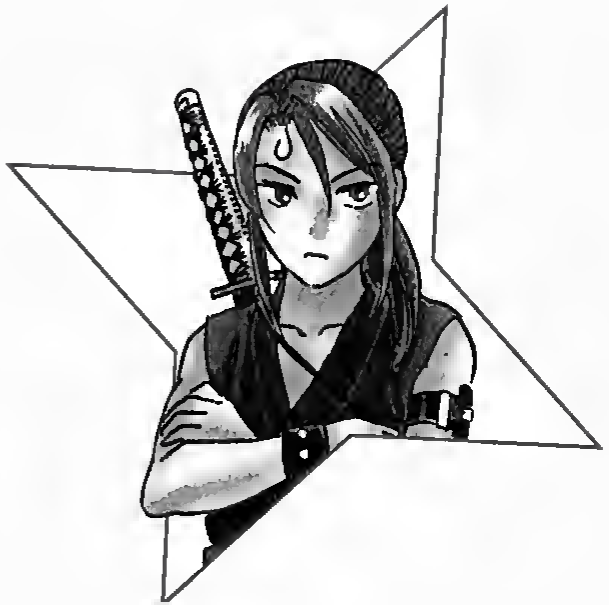
Page 2: **Shimo no Hanzo**
Shimo no means "the Lower," and in this case refers to Hanzo's geographic location rather than social status.

Page 2: **Ninjutsu**
Ninjutsu means the skill or ability of a ninja.

Page 2: **Iga**
Iga is a region on the island of Honshu and also the name of the famous ninja clan that originated there. Another area famous for its ninja is Kouga, in the Shiga prefecture on Honshu. Many books claim that these two ninja clans were mortal enemies, but in reality inter-ninja relations were not as bad as stories might suggest.

Page 13, panel 3: **Manga School**
"Manga School" is a section in Japanese manga magazines for people who want to become manga artists. Participants who receive high scores for their sample manga submissions get an award along with a chance to make their debut in the magazine.

Page 32: **Winter Sonata**
Winter Sonata is a famous Korean TV drama series that was a big hit in Korea. It then became a huge hit in Japan, essentially starting the recent Korean drama/movie craze in Japan.



This is the first volume in which Hanzo actually acts like a ninja. Even though *Toil of the Moon* is a ninja manga, you don't really see a lot of ninja action. These days, I'm trying to go against the "This is _____, so it must be like _____." rule since it only limits the freedom of my imagination. I hope to continue creating manga in a fun, carefree fashion.

–Rinko Ueda

Rinko Ueda is from Nara prefecture. She enjoys listening to the radio, drama CDs, and Rakugo comedy performances. Her works include *Ryo*, a series based on the legend of Gojo Bridge, *Home*, a story about love crossing national boundaries, and *Toil of the Moon (Tsuki no Shippo)*, a romantic ninja comedy.